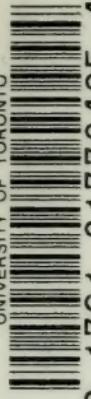


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THE METAMORPHOSES OR
GOLDEN ASS OF ^{THE} APULEIUS
OF MADAURA

TRANSLATED
BY H. E. BUTLER
FELLOW OF NEW COLLEGE

VOL. II

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BOOK VII

As soon as darkness was dispelled and dawn grew white in the sky, and the sun's glowing car began to give light to all things, there arrived one whom the fashion of the greetings interchanged showed to be a member of the robber-band. He sat down at the very entrance of the cave and, on recovering his breath, delivered the following message to his comrades :—

‘ As far as concerns the house of Milo at Hypata, which we recently plundered, we may dismiss our fears and be at our ease. For after your valiant hands had carried off all the spoil and you had returned to our camp, I mingled with the crowd of citizens and, assuming an air of grief and indignation, watched to see what decision they would make as to the investigation of the crime, and to discover whether it was decided to search for the robbers and, if so, how far the search would be pressed ; for I proposed to report everything to you as you had charged me. I fell in with the universal voice of public opinion which, relying on no mere vague suspicions, but on the strongest probability, accused a certain Lucius as being the undoubted author of the crime. For but a few days previously he had presented himself to Milo with forged letters of recommendation and, pretending that he was a man of the highest character, had insinuated himself into Milo's friendship. He was welcomed to the house and treated as an

intimate friend, and in the course of a few days' stay succeeded in beguiling the heart of Milo's serving-maid, for whom he feigned a false passion. By these means he managed to make a careful examination of all the locks, and even to make a thorough inspection of those chambers where the treasures of the house were usually stored.

2 They further adduced as strong proof that he was the criminal the fact that he had escaped that same night at the very moment of the crime, and now was nowhere to be found. Means of flight, such as should enable him the more swiftly to baffle his pursuers and conceal himself far away, had been ready to his hand. For he had brought with him his white horse to carry him away from the scene of his crime. It was confidently hoped that his slave, who had been found in the same house, would give evidence as to his master's criminal designs. He had been lodged in the public gaol by order of the magistrates and the next day had been subjected to various tortures and mangled almost to death, but had made no confession to the effect desired. However, a number of persons had been sent to Lucius's native place, there to seek for the criminal and bring him to justice.'

As he narrated this, I compared the former fortunes of that most happy Lucius with the present woes of a certain miserable ass. I groaned at heart, and it was borne in upon me that there was truth in the parable devised by the sages in the good old days of long ago, which asserted that Fortune was blind, nay, eyeless. For ever she heaps her blessings upon the evil and un-

worthy, and never uses judgement in the choice of her favourites, but rather prefers to dwell with those whom she most should shun, even though she should see them but from afar. Worst of all, she implants in us opinions far from the truth, nay contrary thereto, with the result that the bad man prides himself on a reputation for virtue, while the most innocent of men is lashed with ill report. Wherefore I, whom her most cruel 3 onslaught had turned into a four-footed and most miserable beast, and whose misfortune was such as to call for tears and pity from the hardest heart, was now accused of robbing my host, for whom I entertained the warmest affection. Nay, my crime would have deserved the name of murder rather than robbery. And yet I might not defend my cause or even utter one word of denial. Wherefore, that my silence might not be taken as a sign of a guilty conscience or an admission of the charge, I yielded to my indignation and strove to say 'Not guilty'. The first of these two words I succeeded in uttering not once but many times in extravagant accents, the second was beyond all my efforts to pronounce. I stuck at the first word and brayed continually 'Not, n-o-ot, n-o-o-ot', although I rounded my pendulous lips in the most extravagant manner and worked them till they quivered. But why complain further of the brutality of Fortune, seeing that she was not even ashamed to make me the fellow-slave and yoke-fellow of my own horse that had carried me and obeyed my will?

But in the midst of the tempest these thoughts +

awakened in my soul, I was suddenly assailed by a far more serious anxiety. For I remembered how the robbers had decreed that I should be sacrificed as an offering to the maiden's ghost, and already I began to cast frequent glances at my belly and imagined that I was even now in travail with her. However, at this point he who had just reported the false slander of which I was the victim, produced a thousand pieces of gold, stitched into the lining of his coat for concealment. These he said he had stolen from sundry wayfarers and, being an honest fellow, presented them to the common treasury. He began also to make anxious inquiries as to the welfare of his comrades-in-arms. On learning that several, or rather I should say, all of the bravest members of the band had perished in various daring enterprises, he suggested that they should confine themselves to peaceful errands for a while and bid a truce to warfare of all kinds, devoting their efforts by preference to the acquisition of fresh comrades-in-arms and the restoration of their martial company to its former numbers by the enlistment of youthful recruits. For, he said, the unwilling might be constrained to join them by threats, the willing allured by promise of reward, while not a few would be glad to quit the grovelling life of a slave and form one of a company where all were as free as kings. He himself, a few days since, had met a young fellow, tall in stature, huge in body, and prompt of hand. He had urged this youth and finally persuaded him to turn his hands, which had grown clumsy through prolonged inactivity,

to a more profitable trade, to enjoy, while still he might, the advantages of robust health, to cease to stretch out his sturdy hands to receive a beggar's dole, and rather to employ them for the acquisition of gold by the handful. His words met with general approval, 5 and it was decided to admit the new recruit, whom they regarded as satisfactory, and to seek out others to make good the gaps in their ranks. Thereupon the man who had thus spoken left the cave and after a short delay brought in a gigantic youth, as he had promised. I do not think one of those present could compare with him in stature, for, quite apart from the enormous proportions of the rest of his body, he was a full head taller than all the rest and the first down of youth was beginning to steal across his cheeks. But he was half naked, his clothes were a mere patchwork vilely stitched together, and through their rents one could see his well-fleshed breast and belly.

‘Hail’, said the newcomer on entering, ‘hail, ye servants of Mars, most valorous of gods, hail, ye that are now my true comrades-in-arms, give a willing welcome to a willing recruit, a lively and courageous fellow who would sooner have his body full of wounds than his hands of gold, and cares not a fig for death that others dread. And I would not have you think me a wastrel or a mere beggar, nor judge my virtues by my rags. For once I was the captain of a right valiant company, and laid all Macedonia waste. I am the famous brigand, Haemus of Thrace, at whose name whole provinces shudder. The father who begot me

was named Thero and no less famous a robber than myself. I was nurtured on human blood and brought up among the rank and file of the band, to be the heir 6 and rival of my father's valour. But a short space of time sufficed to deprive me of my comrades, that had been so many and so bold, and of the great store of wealth that once was mine. For in an evil hour I attacked an Imperial Procurator who was on a journey. He had once drawn a salary of two hundred thousand sesterces, but had fallen on evil days. But I am telling things in the wrong order. He was a man who had held a number of offices at Caesar's court, had acquired high renown, and even won the approval of the prince himself. But cunning foes accused him of crime and drove him into exile, the victim of cruel envy. His wife Plotina, a woman of rare loyalty and singular chastity, who had borne ten children and surely established her husband's house, despised and rejected all the charms of the luxurious life of Rome, and accompanied her husband's flight, his partner in misfortune. She cut short her hair, changed her woman's raiment for man's attire and, wearing a girdle filled with her most precious jewels and with coins of gold, moved fearlessly even among the soldiers who guarded her husband with naked swords, shared all his perils, watched with sleepless care over his safety, and endured continual hardship with all the spirit of a man. After passing through his full share of difficulties by the way and terrors on the sea, he had directed his course toward Zacynthus, which the ordinance of fate had appointed for his

temporary residence. It chanced that he disembarked 7 on the coast near Actium, which we had made the sphere of our operations after our descent from Macedonia. Straightway at dead of night we invaded the small inn, not far from the shore where their ship was anchored, and where they lay that evening to avoid the perils of the sea. We laid hands on everything, but no small peril assailed us ere we got safe away. For the moment the wife heard the first sound of the opening door, she ran into the common bedchamber, and set all things in an uproar with her wild cries. She summoned the soldiers and her servants, calling each by his name, nay, she roused the whole neighbourhood to aid. Happily, since all were afraid for their own safety and lay low, we managed to get away unscathed. But forthwith that saintly lady, for I can give her no other name, that wife of peerless loyalty, whose virtue wrought like a spell, addressed her petition to the divine power of Caesar, and secured a speedy return from exile for her husband, and full vengeance for our onslaught. In a word, Caesar decided that Haemus's band should cease to exist. Its destruction took but little time. Such is the power even of our great prince's nod. The whole company were hunted down by detachments of soldiers, brought to bay and cut to pieces. I alone escaped with difficulty from the very jaws of hell. The manner of my escape was as follows. I put on a richly em- 8 broidered woman's robe that hung in many a drooping fold, covered my head with a finely-woven hood, put

on white shoes such as women wear, and clad myself in thin and delicate raiment. Thus disguised and concealed under the likeness of the weaker sex, I mounted on an ass carrying a load of barley-ears and passed through the midst of the enemy's line. For the soldiers, thinking that I was a female donkey-driver, gave me free passage, for even then my cheeks were beardless and shone with all the smoothness of boyhood. Nor even then did I fall away from my father's fame or my own valour, though I admit I was half afraid when I found myself so near the soldiers' swords. Nay, under cover of my false disguise I attacked villas and hamlets single-handed, and so scraped together a trifle of journey-money.' With the words he threw open his rags and poured forth into their midst two thousand pieces of gold, crying, 'See there, I gladly offer that as a contribution, or rather an endowment, for your company, and, if you will have me, I offer you myself as well to be your trusty leader. But a little while, and I'll make your house of stone into a house of gold.'

9 Without a moment's hesitation the robbers elected him by a unanimous vote to be their chief, and offered him a fine robe, bidding him lay aside the rags and tatters which had brought them so much wealth. His new clothes made him look a new man, and after saluting each of his comrades with a kiss, he was given a seat at the head of the table and his captaincy was inaugurated by a banquet and deep potations. In the course of conversation he learned of the maiden's escape on my back and of the monstrous death destined

for both of us. He inquired where the girl was now. In reply they led him to the spot. When he saw her loaded with chains, he turned up his nose in scorn and left her, saying, 'I'm not such a rash fool as to interfere with your decisions, but my conscience would accuse me inwardly were I to hide from you what in my opinion it were best for you to do. I am really anxious for your welfare, so I beg you to give me your confidence. If what I propose displease you, you can return to your project concerning the ass. Now it seems to me that robbers, at least if they be wise, ought to rank nothing higher than their own profit, not even revenge, which often recoils on others than those for whom it was intended. If you destroy the girl by sewing her up in the ass, you will merely vent your indignation without the slightest gain to yourselves. Now I propose that we should take her to some town and there sell her. A girl of her age is sure to fetch a good price, and there are certain old acquaintances of mine, panders to wit, of whom one I am sure would pay a good round sum for her, and provide her with a home such as her rank deserves. She will not escape from him as she did from you. I honestly believe in the proposal I have just made to you, and it will bring you some profit. But of course you are free to make your own decision, and to deal with your own property as you will.'

Thus did the robber's counsel for the treasury, as 10 he seemed to be, plead our cause, the noble saviour of ass and maid. The others took a long time to

deliberate, and the delay set my heartstrings, nay, even my unhappy soul, upon the rack. But at last they assented readily enough to the proposal of their new comrade, and straightway released the maiden from her chains. Now the moment she set eyes upon the young man and heard him suggest her sale to the pander, she began to laugh in the most shameless manner, so that I began, as was only natural, secretly to revile the whole female sex, when I saw this girl who had feigned deep love for her young lover, and expressed a desire to be united in the chaste bonds of wedlock, show sudden joy at the mention of so revolting a prospect. Indeed, at that moment the character and morals of the whole race of womankind hung upon the judgement of an ass. But the youth took up his word again and said, 'Well then, let us go and pray to Mars, the faithful comrade, with a view to the girl's sale and the discovery of fresh recruits. But I see that you have no beast suitable for sacrifice, and not even wine enough for our own consumption. Give me ten comrades therefore. They will be sufficient escort with which to visit the nearest village, where I will buy you materials for a feast worthy of the priests of Mars.'

So spake he, and the others prepared a good fire, and raised an altar of green turf in honour of Mars.

11 Not long afterwards the envoys returned carrying wine-skins, and driving along with them whole flocks of cattle with threats and curses. They selected a large goat of many years and shaggy hair, and sacrificed him as a victim to Mars, their helper and comrade. This

done, forthwith they prepared a sumptuous meal. Then said the stranger, ' You shall see that I am not only going to lead you bravely in fight and foray, but in your pleasures as well.' He set himself to work and made all the necessary preparations with extraordinary skill. He swept the cave, he laid the table, he cooked the meal, he compounded savoury stews and served them daintily ; above all, he drenched his comrades with draughts of wine as deep as they were frequent. Meanwhile, under pretence of fetching some article demanded by the occasion, he continually visited the girl and with a cheerful smile offered her portions which he had stealthily removed from the table, and drink from cups that he had already sipped himself. She took them greedily, and sometimes, when he showed a wish to embrace her, favoured him with kisses wherein was no sign of reluctance. I was much displeased with this. ' Hast thou forgotten ', said I to myself, ' thy bridal and thy lover whose love thou didst return, thou flower of maidenhood, and dost thou prefer this stranger, a blood-stained assassin, to him that was so late thy bridegroom, to whom thy parents plighted thee ? Does not thy conscience prick thee ? Wilt thou trample thy passion underfoot, and play the harlot amid these spears and swords ? What if the other robbers chanced to perceive thee ? Wouldst thou not then fly once more for succour to the ass, and once more bring me to destruction ? In good sooth it is not thy skin but another's thou hast staked to win or lose.'

12 While I was indulging the fury of my indignation in these rhetorical denunciations, I perceived from certain words of theirs, which bore a double meaning but presented no obscurity to so shrewd an ass as myself, that he was not the famous bandit Haemus at all, but Tlepolemus, the girl's betrothed. For as their talk progressed, with a disregard of my presence that could not have been greater had I been a corpse, he said, 'Be of good cheer, sweetest Charitè, for right soon thou shalt see thy foes prisoners, every one.' He then began with increasing insistence to ply the robbers with undiluted wine, which had moreover been slightly warmed. He himself tasted not a drop, while they were reeling, soaken with drink and heavy with wine. Nay, by Hercules, he wakened a suspicion in my mind that he had mixed some drowsy poison in their cups. At last all of them to a man lay buried in wine, as though they had all been dead men. It was now an easy task to bind them all fast with cords, and when he had tied them as securely as he desired, he put the girl upon my back and turned his steps toward his native place.

13 As soon as we arrived the whole town poured forth to see the fulfilment of their prayers. Parents, kinsmen, clients, dependents, foster-children, servants, all ran forth wild with delight, their faces bright with joy. Thou mightest have seen a procession composed of male and female, old and young, and—a strange and, by heaven, a memorable spectacle—a maiden riding in triumph on an ass. Even I myself became merry, and

that I might not seem out of tune with the circumstances, stretched out my ears, puffed out my nostrils and brayed with might and main, nay, the sound of my voice was as thunder. The parents took their daughter to her chamber and there tended her wants, while Tlepolemus, accompanied by a vast army of citizens and beasts of burden, led me back with all speed by the way we had come. Of this I was right glad, for my eternal curiosity filled me with longing to witness the capture of the robbers. We found them fast bound, though for the present the wine was as effective in securing them as were their cords. All their possessions were brought out and dragged to light, we were laden with gold and silver and other articles, while the robbers were some of them thrown, bound as they were, over the precipice on to the rocks below, and the rest slain with their own swords and left on the spot.

We returned to the city full of joy and exultation that we had taken such vengeance. The treasures were consigned to the care of the State, the rescued girl given to Tlepolemus with all the solemnity of the law. Thenceforth the affianced bride lavished every possible attention upon me, whom she hailed as her saviour, and when the day of her actual marriage arrived, she ordered my stable literally to be filled with barley, and had me served with hay sufficient to have satisfied a Bactrian camel. But, oh! what curses had been dark enough for Fotis for having transformed me into an ass and not into a dog! For I saw all the dogs

of the place gorged and swollen with the scraps and remnants of the bounteous wedding-feast. The next day the newly wedded bride began to tell her parents and husband, nor ever tired of telling, how much she owed to me, until they promised to show me the highest honours. With this in view they called together the wisest of their friends and debated how I might most worthily be rewarded. One thought that I should be shut up indoors and lead a life of ease, battenning on choice barley, beans, and vetch. But another favoured my freedom and carried the day with a proposal that I should be sent into the country pastures among the herds of horses ; there I might run wild at my own sweet will, and serve my masters by siring 15 many a mule. Without more ado they called the groom who had charge of the herd, and with many exhortations entrusted me to his keeping to be led away. At this, I must confess, my heart leaped for joy, and I trotted ahead of him rejoicing ; for I had bidden farewell to packs and such-like burdens for ever, had won my liberty, and trusted to find some roses growing in the grassy meadows as soon as spring set in. The thought further occurred to me that, considering the gratitude they had shown me and the honours showered on me in my capacity as an ass, I should be the honoured recipient of yet further benefits when restored to human shape. The keeper of the herd led me to a place far from the city, but alas ! I found that no pleasures nor even freedom awaited me. For no sooner had I arrived, than the

man's wife, a grasping and worthless woman, put me beneath the yoke of a flour-mill, and beating me with a green switch sacrificed my hide to procure bread for herself and family. Nor was she satisfied with wearing me out to win her own food, but she hired me out to the neighbours to grind their corn as well. And though I was subjected to such labours, I was not even given the allowance of food that had been decreed for me. For the barley-meal that should by rights have been mine and had been ground, as I have described, by my own gyrations, she sold to the neighbouring farmers, while I after exerting myself all day at this laborious engine, was served at evening, and not till then, with bran unsifted and foul and full of grits.

Thus did cruel Fortune deliver me over to new tor- 16
ments, utterly broken by my woes, in order doubtless that my deeds of prowess both at home and abroad, as the saying is, might entitle me at last to a full and glorious reward. For the excellent herdsman late in time gave heed to his master's bidding, and at length permitted me to share the pasture of his herds of horses. So I went forth a happy ass, curveting with delicate prancing gait, as I brooded on the joys that should be mine. But my hopes were too high and turned to my mortal peril. For the stallions, who had fed full and fattened long, who were moreover most alarming and in any case stronger than the strongest ass, began to dread me as a rival and, to avoid such a dishonour, disregarded all the ties imposed by Jove the god of

hospitality, and persecuted me with savage and violent hatred. One, rearing up his huge chest on high with towering head and lofty crest, battered me like any boxer with his front hoofs, another turned his fat back, from which the sinews stood out in masses, and skirmished with his heels; a third whinnied with threatening malignity, laid back his ears, bared the sharp edges of his teeth and bit me from head to tail. It was like the story I had read of the Thracian king who delivered unhappy strangers to his wild steeds to be devoured and mangled by them; for that proud tyrant was so sparing of his barley that he assuaged the hunger of his ravening beasts by giving them abundance of human flesh. In like manner I was tormented by the various assaults of the stallions and longed to be back once more revolving at the mill.

17 But Fortune, whom no anguish of mine could ever sate, prepared a fresh torture for me. I was selected to carry wood from the mountain, and a boy was set over me as my master, the worst of all boys that had ever been born. The steep slopes of the lofty mountain tired me sorely, and the jagged spikes of rock cut my hoofs as I hastened over them. But all was as nothing compared with the countless cudgellings with which that boy flayed me. The pain from the blows pierced to my very marrow: he persisted in directing them against my right hip, and by continually striking the same place created a wide and ulcerous cavity. 'Cavity' did I say? Nay, it was like a window, or a pit. He cared naught for this, but continued to

batter the wound repeatedly till it was drenched with blood. Further, he piled such a weight of wood upon my back, that thou hadst thought the load of faggots meant for an elephant and not a mere ass. Nay, when my load overbalanced and hung on one side, and when he ought therefore to have removed the faggots that threatened to fall, and have eased me by lightening the pressure for a little, or at least have shifted the load to the other side till it was evenly balanced, he actually sought to remedy the unevenness of my load by placing stones upon it. Even then the excessive weight of my 18 burden seemed all too little for him, and as a crown to all my horrible afflictions, if we had to cross a river in the course of our journey, he would save his boots from getting wet by leaping on to my hind-quarters and sitting there, truly but a trifling addition to my already monstrous load ! Then if perchance I slipped in the muddy ooze on the bank's slippery brow and my intolerable load caused me to stumble and fall, instead of stretching out a helping hand, pulling up my mouth by the halter, lifting me by the tail, or at least removing a portion of my load that I might have strength to rise, my excellent groom offered not the slightest assistance to my distress. On the contrary, he would catch me by the head or even by the ears and flog and beat me to a pulp from head to tail, thrashing me with a huge cudgel till the very blows had the effect of the medical treatment I required, and I rose to my feet. He even went out of his way to devise the following torment for me. Taking some of the sharpest of thorns, whose prick was full of

venomous poison, he lashed them with a knotted cord into a bundle, which he fastened to my tail that it might hang there to torture me and wound me cruelly with its deadly spikes, as often as my movements 19 caused it to shake and swing. And so I suffered two-fold torment. For when I broke into a gallop to escape his brutal onslaughts, the thorns smote me more violently than ever ; whereas if I halted a moment to ease my pain, I was driven by blows to gallop again. In fact, that abandoned boy seemed to think of nothing save how he might destroy me ; indeed he often threatened with oaths that he would do so.

It must certainly be admitted that he had some cause for directing his detestable malice to yet worse attempts. For one day his excessive brutality was too much for my powers of endurance and I delivered him a violent kick with my heels. After that he contrived the following criminal attempt against me. He saddled me with a heavy load of tow, which he fastened tight to my back with cords. He then led me into the road, and stealing a burning coal from a neighbouring villa, placed it in the very centre of my load. The flimsy fuel soon fanned the fire and gave it nourishment, till it burst into flame and enveloped me in its deadly blaze. I saw no escape from this last torment, no hope of safety. The burning admitted of no delay and made 20 reasoned counsel impossible. But Fortune vouchsafed me a nod of favour in this my extremity. Perhaps it was only that she reserved me for perils yet to be, but assuredly she saved me from the imminent death my

tormentor had designed for me. I chanced to espy a pool hard by, a pool of muddy water, freshly formed by the rain of yesterday. Into this I leapt blindly and immersed myself from head to heel, till the fire was wholly extinguished, and I emerged lightened from my burden and delivered from destruction. But that abandoned boy had the effrontery to cast the blame of his own crime upon me, and asserted to all the herdsmen that I had gone out of my way to step across a fire lighted by one of the neighbours, that I had then stumbled and fallen, enveloping myself in a fire of my own choosing. Then laughing in my face he added, 'How long are we to go on feeding this firebrand of an ass?'

Not many days had passed ere he conceived a yet worse design against me. For after selling the wood which I was carrying at the first cottage he came to, he led me home exclaiming that my abandoned conduct was altogether too much for him. I had made his life a misery and he refused to drive me any longer, and thus uplifted the voice of his complaint: 'Do you see 21 that lazy sluggard, that intolerable ass? He has surpassed all his former crimes and created fresh perils to vex my soul. For as soon as he catches sight of any wayfarer, regardless of age or sex, he throws off his load and sometimes his pack-saddle as well, and attacks them like a maniac, battering them and biting them with his loathsome muzzle. His behaviour will breed quarrels and lawsuits of a serious character, and may even land us in a criminal process. It was only

yesterday that, catching sight of a young lady, he threw off his load and scattered it in all directions, knocked her down, and, had not sundry wayfarers run up at the sound of her shrieks and lamentations and saved her by snatching her away from beneath his hoofs to a place of safety, she would have been trampled and torn in pieces and died an agonizing death. And as for us we should have been left with the prospect of the assizes and the gallows.'

22 To these lies he added other accusations which told heavily against my dignified silence, and violently incited the other herdsmen to desire my death. At last one of them said, 'Why don't we slay this monster and sacrifice him as his crimes deserve? You there, my boy, go and kill him on the spot, throw his entrails to the dogs, and keep the rest of his flesh for our labourers' supper. We will cure his skin with ashes and take it to our masters. We can easily lie to them, and tell them that he was killed by a wolf.' My malign accuser thus found himself appointed to carry out the herdsman's sentence. He was filled with joy and mocked insultingly at my woes, for he remembered that kick of mine, which I would to God had slain him. Then without a moment's delay he set himself to sharpen a sword upon a grindstone.

23 However one of the rustic assembly interposed, 'It would be a shame', he said, 'to kill so fine an ass, when we have only to geld him to stop this mischief and, what is more, to make him sturdier and stouter than before. For I know of many cases where not

only lazy asses, but even the fiercest steeds have had their fury tamed in this manner and have been rendered quiet and tractable and suited for carrying burdens and for all manner of hard service. So unless my suggestion falls on unwilling ears, in a few days, as soon as the next market, which I have arranged to visit, is over, I can get the necessary instruments from home and then return to you and make this wild beast milder than any sheep.'

Thanks to this proposal I was snatched from the 24 very jaws of death and hell, but reserved for a most cruel doom. I wept and mourned the mutilation I must undergo, I meditated suicide by starvation or by casting myself down a steep place; for thus, though I should surely die, I should yet die entire. At early dawn, while I still hesitated which manner of death I should choose, the boy, that would have slain me, led me out along the mountain track that I knew so well. After a while he tied me to the hanging bough of a huge holm-oak and himself climbed to a spot a little above the track to hew some wood with his axe against our return journey. But suddenly, lo and behold! a fearful bear crept forth from a cave hard by, its huge head erect in air. As soon as I perceived it, fear laid hold upon me and, dismayed by its sudden appearance, I threw all the weight of my body on to my hind legs, plunged backwards, and with neck strained high in air broke the thong that bound me and forthwith made off in headlong flight. Not content with such speed as my feet lent me, I hurled myself bodily down the slopes

till I reached the plains below. Such was my haste to escape not only that fearful bear, but also the boy whom I feared yet more.

25 At this point a wayfarer espied me, as I wandered all alone. He seized me and, speedily mounting on my back, drove me with blows from his staff along a side path that was strange to me. I was far from unwilling and readily broke into a gallop, for now, methought, I should escape the cruel mutilation for which I was destined. His blows however moved me but little, so accustomed was I to be cudgelled and flogged as a matter of course.

But Fortune was still obstinately resolved to work me woe, and with amazing speed thwarted my hopes of safety and contrived fresh snares for my undoing. For my masters the herdsmen had lost a heifer and, as they scoured the country in search of her, chanced to meet us. They seized my halter forthwith and would have dragged me away. But my rider offered a sturdy and valiant resistance, and calling gods and men to witness, cried, 'Why this robbery with violence? Why do you attack me thus?'

To this they replied, 'Do you call this rude treatment? Why, you have stolen our ass. And tell us too where you have hidden the body of the boy that drove him, for assuredly you have slain him.' With these words they dragged him to the ground, beat him with their fists, and bruised him with their feet. He began by swearing that he had seen no driver, but meeting me at large and unattended had caught me that

he might restore me to my master and claim a reward for my discovery. ‘Ah!’ he said, ‘if only this ass—would to God I had never set eyes on him!—could find human speech and bear witness to my innocence, you would be sorry, I can assure you, for the wrong you have done me.’

These assertions moved them not a whit. Wild with anger, the herdsmen tied a rope about his neck and led him back to the thick coppice on the mountain side, whence the boy used to carry wood. They 26 sought for him, but he was nowhere to be found. Only they beheld the fragments of his mangled body that had been torn in pieces and scattered in many places. I saw that beyond all doubt it was the bear’s teeth that had done the deed and, had power of speech been mine, I had gladly told what I knew. However, I did all that I could. I rejoiced in silence at the vengeance that had overtaken my tormentor, late though it was in coming. At length they discovered all the scattered fragments of the corpse and after painfully putting them together consigned them to the grave. But they continued to abuse my Bellerophon as an undoubted thief and a bloody murderer, and took him with them to the cottages where they dwelt, purposing, so they said, as soon as the next day dawned to take him before the magistrates that he might receive condign punishment.

In the meantime, while the boy’s parents mourned him with weeping and beating of the breast, the rustic, true to his promise, returned and demanded that he

should proceed to do with me as had been resolved. But one of my masters replied, 'It's a very different loss we are mourning to-day, but to-morrow you may work your will upon the worthless beast. You can cut off his head if you like. Our comrades will be ready enough to help you, I can assure you.'

27 So it came about that my calamity was postponed to the morrow, and in truth I felt grateful to that excellent boy who, whatever he might have been in life, by dying had retarded my execution for the brief space of one day. Yet I had but little time for repose or self-congratulation, for the boy's mother, weeping for his cruel death, bathed in tears that ever streamed afresh, robed all in black and tearing her ash-strewn hair with either hand, uttered a wild scream, burst into my stable with a cry and, beating and tearing her breast with might and main, began thus to rail upon me: 'See, that beast has not a thought of care, but lies in his stall and gluts his greedy appetite and swells his deep insatiable belly with continued gluttony. He has no pity for my woe and remembers not his dead master's fearful death. Nay, he despises my old age, contemns my infirmity, and thinks that his base crime shall go unrewarded. He presumes we think him innocent! That is always the way with evildoers. They defy their guilty conscience and imagine they will be left in peace. I call heaven to witness, thou vile beast, that even if thou couldst for the moment find human voice, thou couldst not persuade the veriest fool that thou art guiltless of this foul crime. For thou mightest have

fought with thy hoofs in my poor boy's behalf and defended him with thy teeth. Often thou didst find means to attack him with kicks from thy heels, and couldst thou not have defended him from death with like alacrity? At least thou mightest have taken him on thy back, have carried him away and snatched him from the bloody hands of his brutal murderer; thou needest not have cast down and deserted thy fellow-slave, thy master, thy comrade, thy guardian, and fled away alone. Dost thou not know that even those who refuse aid to those in peril of death are punished, as having sinned thereby? But thou shalt no longer exult over my woes, thou murderer. I will make thee feel that nature can lend strength to grief and woe.' So saying, she thrust 28 her hands into her girdle, unfastened it, bound my feet together and tied them tightly, that I might have no means of defending myself or avenging my wrong. Then seizing the pole that was used to bar the stable door, she ceased not to belabour me with it, till her strength gave out for very weariness and the very weight of the cudgel caused her to let it slip from her hands and fall to the ground.

BOOK VIII

I IT was midnight and the cock was crowing when a youth arrived from the neighbouring town, who seemed to me to be one of the servants of that same Charitè who had shared my sorrows in the robbers' cave. He sat him down by the fire in the midst of his fellow-slaves and told us a strange and horrible story, how that Charitè was dead and her home stricken with calamity.

‘Grooms, shepherds, and cowherds’, he began, ‘our mistress Charitè is dead. Poor girl, it was a terrible fate that carried her off, and not alone did she go down to dwell among the dead. But that you may know all, I will tell you what happened from the beginning. It is a tale that more learned men than I, men to whom Fortune has granted the pen of a ready writer, might well set down on paper in the guise of history.

There lived in a neighbouring city a youth of the highest birth, whose wealth moreover matched his rank; but he was given over to harlots and rioting in taverns and drinking in broad daylight. And so it came about that he had criminal relations with robber-bands and had even imbrued his hands in human blood. His name was Thrasyllus. The facts were as I have told 2 you and were notorious. This young man then, as soon as Charitè was ripe for marriage, was one of her

most urgent wooers, and pressed his suit for her hand with the utmost fervour. However, although he surpassed all the other suitors in wealth and proffered the richest gifts that he might persuade her parents to decide in his favour, they objected to his character and he had to endure the humiliation of being rejected. Now when our master's daughter was married to the virtuous Tlepolemus, the youth continued obstinately to nurse his baffled passion, with which there was mingled not a little resentment at having been denied her hand. He sought an opportunity to take bloody vengeance. At last he found a suitable occasion for presenting himself and made him ready for the crime he had so long contemplated. And so on the very day on which the courage and resource of her betrothed had rescued the maiden from the robbers' threatening swords, he mingled ostentatiously with the crowd of those who thronged to offer their congratulations ; he complimented the newly wedded pair on their present happiness and on the hopes of children held out by such a match, and was received into our house as one of the most distinguished guests out of honour to his high birth. For he concealed his dark designs and wore the false mask of loyal friendship.

He began to pay frequent visits and entered freely into conversation with them. Sometimes he was even admitted to eat and drink with them. He became more and more intimate, and gradually without knowing it fell headlong into the deep disastrous abyss that Cupid had made ready for him. What marvel was it,

seeing that the fires of cruel love, being but small to begin with, delight with their first warmth, but, as use fans their heat, burst out into uncontrollable flame and consume men even to their inmost marrow?

3 Long did Thrasyllus ponder in his heart what he should do. He could find no suitable occasion for a secret interview; he saw more and more clearly that the number of Charitè's attendants must prevent him from any hope of gratifying his lawless passion; he realized that the bonds of their young and ever-increasing love were too strong to be broken, and that the girl's lack of experience in conjugal infidelity was a hopeless obstacle, even if she had been willing—and it was useless to expect that she would be willing. Notwithstanding, a fatal perversity drove him on to attempt the impossible, as though it were no impossibility at all. That which at first seems hard to do, appears easy of accomplishment when lapse of time has given force to love. Behold then—nay, I beseech you, listen with souls all on fire with expectation—behold how the impulse of his mad lust found issue.

4 One day Tlepolemus went out to hunt, taking Thrasyllus with him. His purpose was to run down certain wild beasts, if indeed roedeer can be called wild. For Charitè never allowed her husband to pursue beasts armed with sharp teeth or horns. And now they had come to a leafy hill roofed with a dark covert of shady boughs, which concealed the roedeer from the eyes of the hunters. Into this wood they sent hounds of noble breed and skilled to track down the game, with

the intention that they should attack the quarry in the lair where it lay. The hounds forthwith, mindful of their training and their skill, separated and surrounded every entrance to the wood. At first they made but a low growling sound, then at a given signal suddenly they burst into a fierce and discordant baying that pealed through all the wood. But no roe nor timid hind, no doe, the gentlest of all creatures of the wild, but a huge wild boar, such as none had ever beheld, rose up before them. The muscles stood forth in masses beneath his tough skin, the hair stuck out on his hideous hide, all rough with bristles that pricked up along his back. Loud was the grinding of his teeth, foam issued from his mouth and fire from his threatening eyes, the onset of his groaning jaws was fierce as lightning. The bolder of the dogs ran to meet him. He tossed his tusks to left and right, tore them and slew them. Then he burst through the slender net that had checked his first charge and broke away. We were all dismayed with fear, for we were used to 5 hunts that were wholly free from peril, and since we had no weapons or means of defence, we hid ourselves close in trees or in the cover afforded by the leafy brushwood. But Thrasyllus had now found an opportunity for putting his foul designs into effect and ensnaring his rival. Wherefore he hailed him with these taunting words:—

“Why stay we here dumbfounded and confused? Why harbour we vain fear like yonder grovelling slaves? Why cower like trembling women and let so

fair a quarry slip from our very hands? Why do we not mount our horses and pursue with what speed we may? Do you take the javelin and I will take the spear." They tarried not an instant, but leapt forthwith upon their steeds and sped after the beast with all their might. But the monster forgot not his native strength, wheeled round his wild career and, all ablaze with the fire of his fierce rage, whetted his tusks and sought, in doubt at first, on whom he should direct his onset. Tlepolemus first launched his javelin upon the monster's back. But Thrasyllus spared the beast and with his spear struck and hamstrung the hind legs of the horse that carried Tlepolemus. The animal tumbled backwards into the pool made by his own blood, and falling full length upon his back all unwillingly cast his master to the ground. In the twinkling of an eye the furious boar rushed upon him where he lay, first ripped through his clothes and then, as he strove to rise, tore his body also with repeated blows from his tusks. His trusty friend showed no repentance for the crime he had begun, and the sight of his comrade's deadly peril, the firstfruits of his fell design, was far from satisfying him. Nay, as Tlepolemus writhed upon the ground, striving to protect his wounded legs and calling piteously for his help, he drove the spear through his right thigh. He did this with the less compunction, because he imagined that the wound made by the steel would be indistinguishable from the gash carved by the boar's tusk. Next he 6 transfixed the beast also with a well-aimed blow. Thus was our young master slain. We rushed forth each of

us from the place where he was hiding, a gloomy company. But the murderer, though his heart was full of joy—for his prayers were crowned with success and his enemy lay dead—yet suffered not his countenance to reveal his exultation, but put on a gloomy expression, feigned grief and passionately cast his arms about the corpse that he himself had slain and performed all the duties of a mourner with crafty dissimulation. Only his tears refused to flow. So aping us, who mourned in good earnest, he put the guilt of his own hands upon the beast.

The crime was no sooner done than the fame of it spread, directing its course first to the house of Tlepolemus and filling the ears of the unhappy bride. As soon as she heard the news—and never again shall she hear such news—her senses left her; wild with frenzy and with mad raving steps she rushed through all the crowded places of the city and the country fields beyond, bewailing her husband's fate with maniac cries. The citizens flocked together in melancholy groups. Those who met her made themselves one with her grief and followed her as she went. The town was emptied of its folk, so great was the desire to see what had befallen. And behold! she ran to her husband's corpse and cast herself swooning down upon his body, and there all but surrendered to him the spirit that had been so linked to him in life. At last her friends succeeded with great difficulty in tearing her away and she remained unwillingly in the land of the living, while the dead was carried home for burial with all the people for its funeral train.

7 But Thrasyllus passed all bounds in his false grief. He cried and beat his breast, and the tears which he had failed to summon for his first outbreak of grief now flowed for ever-increasing joy, while the affectionate names he lavished on the dead would have deceived Truth herself. In lamentable tones, he cried, "My friend, my playmate, my comrade, my brother!" and last of all "Tlepolemus!" Also from time to time he would stay Charité's hands from beating of her breasts, soothe her sorrow, check her screams, and with soft words assuage her agony of grief. Many were the tales of the blind strokes of wandering chance through all the world that he wove for her, while with feigned affection he lavished all the services of friendship, that he might win her woman's heart and feed his hateful passion with guilty joy.

But as soon as the rites of funeral were over, the girl would have made haste to go down to join her husband in the grave. She tried all ways, but above all that soft and gentle way that needs no weapons, but is like to quiet sleep. She took no food and pined away; she had no care for her body, but sat dishevelled in the dark, hidden from sight, and renouncing the daylight for ever. But Thrasyllus, partly by his own entreaties, partly with the assistance of Charité's friends and relatives, nay of her parents themselves, succeeded—such was his obstinate insistence—in persuading her first to take a bath and then to eat and so restore her strength. For she was pale and unkempt and well-nigh spent. Out of reverence for her parents,

whom she held dearer than aught else, she conquered her reluctance, yielded to duty's call, and proceeded, with no cheerful countenance but yet a little less overcast with gloom, to perform all the tasks of life as she was bidden. But deep in her heart, even to her inmost marrow, grief and anguish consumed her. She spent whole days and nights in mournful yearning for the dead, paid divine homage to his portraits, in which by her order he was represented as the god Bacchus, appointed slaves to serve his worship, and tormented herself even with her consolations. But Thrasyllus,⁸ who was of an impetuous and headstrong nature as his name denoted, did not hesitate to approach her before ever her tears had allayed her grief or the frenzy of her stricken spirit sunk to rest or woe grown weary by its own excess. She was still weeping for her husband, still rending her garments, still tearing her hair, when he made proposals of marriage and with shameless insolence revealed the unuttered secrets of his heart and the guile that should never have been told. But Charitè shrank in horror and loathing from his wicked words and, as though stricken by some heavy thunder-clap or baleful star or even by the levin-bolt of Jove, fell senseless, her body in a swoon and her mind o'erclouded. But after a space her spirit slowly revived within her. She roared like a wild beast and perceiving all the false guile of the abandoned Thrasyllus, put off her wooer's passion that she might sharpen her counsel. During this respite the shade of Tlepolemus, that had been so foully slain, raising a face all blotched

with gore and unsightly with pallor, appeared before her and thus addressed her chaste slumbers: “My wife, for no other shall ever call thee by that name, though my memory wither in thy breast and the stroke of cruel death has broken the bonds of love, yet hear my prayer. Marry whom thou wilt—and be it with happier omen—only wed not the accursed Thrasyllus, nor speak to him, nor sit at table with him, nor lie in his bed. Fly from the blood-stained hands of my assassin. Murder shall bring thee no blessing! Wed him not! Those wounds, whose gore thy tears have washed away, were dealt not by the tusk alone. It was the spear of the wicked Thrasyllus sundered me from thee.” Thereupon he told her all and revealed the tragedy of his murder.

She lay even as first she had fallen into the sleep of sorrow, her face pressed against the couch; the streaming tears bedewed her cheeks even while she slumbered and, as though some sudden torment had come upon her with the renewal of her grief, she uttered a long scream, tore her robe and beat her shapely arms with maddened hands. Nevertheless, she revealed the vision of the night to no one, but concealed her knowledge of the crime, for she was resolved to punish the wicked assassin and snatch herself from a life where all was sorrow. And now, lo! once more her odious wooer came, blinded by his passion, to din his suit into ears that were barred against him. She repulsed his approaches with gentle words and, playing her part with wondrous skill, made the following answer

to his insistent entreaties and his grovelling prayers: “The sweet image of him that was thy comrade and my husband still dwells before my eyes, still does the perfume sweet as cinnamon that breathed from his ambrosial limbs linger in my nostrils, still does the beauty of Tlepolemus live in my heart. Therefore thou wilt be wise, most wise, if thou grant his hapless widow time for the slaking of her lawful sorrow, until the months that have yet to run have rolled away and the year be fulfilled. And this counsel is for thy welfare no less than for mine honour. For I fear lest by the unseemly haste of our wedding we should waken the just indignation of my husband’s resentful ghost and rouse him to our undoing.”

Her words, however, availed nothing to sober 10 Thrasyllus. He derived no comfort even from her promise of hope for the future, but continued shamelessly with passionate tongue to whisper words of love into her ear until at last she feigned to yield and answered thus: “Thrasyllus, I have one earnest request to make which thou must grant. If we are to meet in the meantime, we must do so in silence and secrecy, and none of the household must know of it, till the days that remain of the year have run their course.”

Thrasyllus was caught in the snare and fell a victim to her deceitful promise. With many words he agreed with her that their meetings should be secret and, counting all else as nought compared with his desire to possess her, prayed for the coming of night and the

thick dark. “But have a care, my friend,” said Charitè; “see that thou muffle thyself in thy cloak when thou comest and that thou come without a single comrade. Then at the first watch approach my door in silence, cry ‘hist!’ once and once only, and await the coming of my nurse. She will sit close to the door and watch for thy coming. The moment the house is unbarred, she will admit thee and lead thee to my chamber with never a taper to betray our secret.”

11 Thrasyllus assented gladly to this scheme for their fatal union. He suspected no harm, but wild with expectation did nought save moan that the day wore heavily and that evening was long in coming. But when at last the sun gave place to night, he disguised himself as Charitè had bidden him, was deceived by the nurse’s counterfeited vigilance, and crept into the chamber full of hope. Then the old nurse, in accordance with her mistress’s bidding, produced with every show of courtesy some cups and a flagon of wine in which a deadly poison had been infused. He drank greedily and repeatedly, with no thought of evil. The nurse made lying excuses for the late arrival of her mistress, saying that she was watching by her father’s sick-bed, and easily succeeded in drowning him in a deep slumber. As soon as he lay upon his back, exposed defenceless to all attacks, she called her mistress. Charitè rushed upon him. Her spirit was fierce as any man’s, and she moaned forth the fury of 12 her soul as she stood over the assassin. “See”, she said, “my husband’s loyal friend, this mighty hunter,

this spouse after my own heart. See! this is that right hand that shed the blood that was as mine own; this is the heart that contrived such crafty schemes for my undoing, these are the eyes in whose sight I have found favour—shame upon me!—the eyes that prayed for the coming of the dark with hopes that forestalled but the coming of their own doom. Sleep without care and blest be thy slumber! I will not smite thee with sword or steel. God forbid thou shouldst die as my husband died and be his peer in death. Thine eyes shall die while still thou livest and nothing more shalt thou see save in the dreams of sleep. I will make thee feel that thy enemy's death was less of a calamity to him than is thy life to thee! Thou shalt never more see the light, thou shalt lack the hand of a comrade to guide thee, thou shalt not possess Charitè nor have joy of thy wedlock, thou shalt find no peace in the quiet of the grave nor joy in the delight of living; but thou shalt wander like a fleeting ghost betwixt hell and the light of heaven, seeking the hand in vain that robbed thee of thine eyes, and for a crown of sorrow thou shalt never know who wronged thee. I will pour libations to the tomb of my beloved Tlepolemus from the blood that streams from thine eyes and their sight shall be my offering to his blessed spirit. But why delay? So dost thou win respite from the torture that is thy due and dreamest perchance that thou hast me in thy arms. Nay, that embrace shall be thine undoing. Quit the darkness of sleep and awake to that other night that is thy doom. Raise thine eyeless

face, recognize thy punishment, comprehend thy woe, reckon thy torments ! 'Tis thus—blinded—thine eyes have pleased my chastity and darkness is the torch that hath lit thy bridal chamber. Thou shalt have the Furies to attend thee when thou weddest, blindness shall be thy guide and the pangs of a guilty conscience shall sting thee always."

13 Thus did she prophesy, and taking a pin from her hair she stabbed the eyes of Thrasyllus through and through, till nought of them was left. Then ere his uncomprehending anguish had wholly driven from him the heavy sleep of wine, she caught up a naked sword, even the sword that had hung at Tlepolemus' side, broke forth from the house and ran wildly through the midst of the city, and with some deadly purpose in her soul, as all might see, hastened straight to her husband's tomb. Meanwhile we and all the citizens, leaving our houses empty, followed eagerly after her, each man exhorting his comrade to snatch the blade from her mad hands. But Charitè took her stand beside Tlepolemus' coffin and with the threat of her shining sword drove away each man that approached her. But when she saw the streaming tears and heard the importunate lamentations of all around her, "Cease," she cried, "cease from your untimely tears, cease from the grief that suits not with my noble deeds. I have taken vengeance on the blood-stained murderer of my husband, I have punished the foul wretch that would have ravished me to be his bride. And now the time has come ! This sword shall show me the path to the shades of under-

ground where dwells my loved Tlepolemus." Then 14 when she had told them all that had happened, the commands given her by her husband in a dream and the craft wherewith she had ensnared and stricken Thrasylus, she drove the sword beneath her right breast and fell. And there as she writhed in her heart's blood, she stammered a few inarticulate words and breathed forth her heroic spirit.

Then her servants made speed and with loving care washed clean the lifeless body of the unhappy Charitè and restored her to her husband, to dwell with him in the selfsame tomb, his bride to all eternity. As for Thrasylus, when he learned all, he perceived that, howsoever he made an end, he could never atone for the calamity he had wrought, and knew that not even the sword could wipe out the deep stain of his dark guilt. Wherefore, self-prompted, he betook him to the tomb and ever and again crying, "Wronged ghosts, behold me! here I fall, victim self-offered at your tomb!" he had the gates of the vault fast barred upon him, resolved to starve himself to death and end the life his own conscience had condemned.'

Such was the young man's tale, and as he told it 15 sighs shook him and ever and again he wept, so that all the peasants were deeply stirred for sorrow. Then fearing the strange rule of new lords and pitying sore the calamity fallen upon their master's household, they made ready for flight. But he who was charged with the care of the horses and had received such urgent commands that he should look well after all my wants,

brought forth all the treasures stored in his cottage, loaded them on the backs of myself and the other beasts and made off with them in flight from his former home. We carried women and tiny children, chickens, sparrows, kids, puppies; in a word, all those whose feeble steps must have delayed our flight travelled on our legs in place of their own. Enormous as my load was, it weighed but lightly on me, for my flight was cheered by the joyful thought that I was leaving the wretch who was to have maimed me far behind.

After crossing the rugged ridge of a forest-clad mountain, we came once more to the wide expanse of a low-lying plain, traversed it and, just as our road was growing dark with the shades of evening, came to a country town that was both wealthy and populous. The inhabitants forbade us to leave it during the night or even at early dawn. The whole district, they said, was infested with numbers of large wolves, beasts of amazing size and extraordinary ferocity, whose depredations spread far and wide. They even beset the roads and attacked passers-by like any gang of robbers. Nay, when they were really maddened by the fierce pangs of hunger they would break into the neighbouring country houses, and the destruction, which was usually confined to dumb animals, would threaten the lives even of men. Indeed all along the road by which we should have to travel there lay half-eaten bodies of men, the whole place being white with their fleshless bones. For this reason, they warned us, we must proceed with the utmost

caution, taking care above all to avoid the perils that lurked on every side by travelling in broad daylight when the morning was well advanced and the sun in his full glory, inasmuch as the mere presence of the light lulled the fury of these fierce beasts. Further, while we were passing this dangerous portion of our route, we should march not in a long and straggling line, but in dense column. However, our worthless drivers, 16 rendered rash by their blind desire to escape and by the fear that their masters might, for all they knew, be following them, despised this sound advice and did not wait for the dawn, but about the third watch of the night loaded us and drove us out to take the road. Thereupon I, in fear of the peril of which we had been warned, thrust myself as far as was possible into the midst of the crowd, and hid myself in the dense throng of pack-horses, thinking by these means to save my hind-quarters from the attack of wild beasts. In fact, everybody began to marvel at my speed, which outstripped that of the horses. But as a matter of fact, it was fear, not nature, lent me such swiftness. I reflected to myself that even the famous Pegasus had been rendered swifter of flight through fear, and for that very reason won his title of the winged horse, since he leaped and bounded sky-high in his terror of the fangs of that fire-breathing monster the Chimaera. Even the herdsmen who led us were armed as if for battle. One carried a lance, another a hunting-spear, another javelins, a fourth a club and large stones as well, which the rugged track supplied in abundance. There were others who

carried sharpened stakes, but the majority were provided with blazing torches that the fear of them might keep the wild beasts at a distance. The only thing that was wanting to give us a thoroughly military appearance was a trumpet. Our terrors were largely imaginary, but it availed us little that we were quit of them, for we straightway became entangled in far worse difficulties. For although no wolves had attacked us or even appeared at a distance, being perhaps frightened by the noise of such a stalwart column of young men or engaged in prowling elsewhere, the labourers of 17 a farm which we chanced to pass, thinking that such a band could only be a band of robbers, became alarmed and anxious about their property and let loose upon us some large and savage dogs, fiercer than any wolf or bear. These beasts, which had been carefully trained as watch-dogs, they hounded upon us with hunting holloas and cries of all kinds, so that, maddened beyond their natural ferocity by the cries of their masters, they rushed upon us and, surrounding us on every side, assailed and rent man and beast indiscriminately, until after a prolonged attack they had most of them upon the ground. The sight was in truth one demanding pity rather than description. Numbers of excited hounds pursued and caught those who attempted to fly, gripped those who stood their ground, stood over those that fell, and distributed their bites through all our caravan. Great as this peril was, it was followed by a worse disaster. For the rustics hurled rocks upon us with all their might from the tops of buildings and the slopes of the

neighbouring hill, so that we could scarcely tell which danger was the most pressing, the dogs at close quarters or the stones at long range. One of the latter suddenly struck the head of a woman who was sitting on my back. The pain brought the tears to her eyes, and with a loud cry she summoned her husband, the herdsman of whom I have already spoken, to come to her aid. He appealed to the protection of heaven and, 18 as he wiped the blood from his wife's wound, cried shrilly, 'Cruel men, why thus attack and overwhelm a band of wretched struggling wayfarers? What wrongs have you to avenge or what plunder do you hope for? You do not dwell in the caves of wild beasts or in the rocky fastnesses of barbarians, that you should thus rejoice in the shedding of human blood.' He had scarce spoken when the thick shower of stones ceased, the fierce dogs were called in, and the tempest came to an end. One of our assailants answered from the top of a cypress, 'We are no robbers and have no desire to plunder you. We have been defending ourselves from robbery at *your* hands. But now you can go on your way undisturbed in peace and quiet.'

So said he, and we continued our journey. Our wounds were of many kinds. Some complained of cuts from a stone, others of bites, but all were damaged. After we had proceeded some way, we came to a grove of lofty trees to which a carpet of greensward lent added charm. There our drivers resolved to rest awhile to refresh themselves, and to give their various wounds the careful attention they required. They lay

scattered here and there upon the ground, and hastened first to refresh their wearied spirits, and then to apply remedies of various kinds to their wounds. One washed the blood away in the waters of a stream that flowed hard by, applying sponges soaked in vinegar, another bound his gaping wounds with bandages.

19 While they were thus engaged, each in attending to his health, an old man spied them from the top of a hill. The goats that fed about him showed him to be a herdsman. One of our party asked him if he had any milk for sale, either fresh or newly pressed into a cheese. He shook his head repeatedly. Then 'How', he asked, 'can you think of food or drink or any other refreshment? Do none of you realize where you are sitting?' With these words he turned and retired to a distance, driving his sheep with him. His words and his hasty departure struck no small terror into the hearts of our herdsmen. And while in their fear they strove to discover what was the matter with the place and found none to tell them, another old man, of great stature but bowed with years, approached along the road, leaning heavily upon a staff and weeping floods of tears, as he dragged his weary feet. When he saw us he broke into loud lamentation, embraced the knees of our young masters one after the other, and thus entreated them:—

20 'By the fates and guardian spirits that watch over your ways, I implore you, help a feeble old man, save my little grandson from the jaws of death, and restore him to be the joy of my gray hairs. So may ye come

to such ripe years as mine, griefless and full of strength. My grandson, my sweet companion on this journey, as he strove to catch a sparrow that was singing in the hedge, fell into a pit hard by, that gapes beneath the roots of yonder bushes and is now in extreme peril of his life. I can hear him weeping even now and calling his grandsire again and again to come to his help, so that I know he still lives. But I cannot help him, as you see, by reason of my body's feebleness. But you are young and strong, and it will be easy for you to help a poor old man and save the boy, my only child and the last that is left me of all my heirs.'

Thus he besought them, tearing his gray hairs, and 21 moved them all to pity. Then one, the boldest and youngest and sturdiest of them all, the only one moreover who had come out of our recent conflict without a wound, rose nimbly and asked where the boy had fallen. The old man pointed with his finger to some rough brambles not far off, and the youth followed him without delay. When at last the whole party was refreshed, ourselves with grazing and our masters with tendance of their wounds, every one took up his load and proceeded on the march. At first they summoned the youth by repeated calling of his name, but soon, disturbed by his long tarrying, they sent one of their number to fetch their comrade, tell him that it was time to go, and bring him back to them. After a short interval the messenger returned with trembling limbs and face pale as boxwood. It was a strange tale he had to tell of his fellow-servant. He had

seen him lying on the ground while a large dragon stood over him and gnawed his body, the greater part of which was already consumed. The wretched old man was nowhere to be seen. On hearing this tale and comparing it with the words of the shepherd, they perceived that it was against this monster and no other inhabitant of the place that he had uttered his sinister warning. Wherefore they left this ghastly spot and hastened forward in flight yet more swiftly than before, driving us on with many a blow from their cudgels.

22 After we had covered a large distance at extraordinary speed, we came to a village where we rested the whole night. Now I must tell you of a very remarkable crime that had been committed in this place.

A certain slave to whom his master had given entire charge of his household, and who acted as bailiff to the enormous estate on which we had put up for the night, was consumed with passion for a certain free woman of another house, although he was already married to a fellow-slave of his own household. His wife, in a transport of rage at his unfaithfulness, lit and consumed with fire all her husband's account-books, together with all the valuables that the house contained. And even this outrage seemed to her insufficient vengeance for so deep a wrong ; she turned her madness against her own life, fastened a noose about her neck and, tying the little child, which she had long since borne this same husband, to the rope, she hung herself over a deep well and cast herself down, carrying the little one with her. The master was much

enraged at their death and, seizing the wretched slave whose conduct had caused his wife to commit so foul a crime, had him stripped and smeared all over with honey and bound fast to a fig-tree within whose hollow stem were nests swarming with ants which ran to and fro in countless rippling multitudes. As soon as they perceived the sweet and honeyed smell given off by his body they fastened upon him. Their bites were tiny but numerous, and after long hours of torment ate away the man's flesh and even his entrails, till they had stripped his limbs and consumed him utterly, leaving only the bones reft of their flesh to gleam with ghastly whiteness on that fatal tree.

From this loathsome harbourage also we departed ²³ and, leaving the villagers plunged in deep mourning for this tragedy, set forth once more and, after travelling for the whole day through the level plain, came wearily to a fair city with many inhabitants. The herdsmen determined to make this place their abode and continual dwelling-place, for they felt they had found a secure hiding-place, however far their pursuers might push their search, while the rich harvests with which this lucky town was blest proved a further attraction. We beasts of burden were allowed three days' rest, that we might fetch a better price. We were then led out to market, the crier named our prices in a loud voice, and the horses and the other asses were sold to wealthy purchasers. I only was left over, for most of the buyers passed me by in scorn. At last, impatient at the continual handling of those who sought to cal-

culate my age by my teeth, I caught hold of the dirty stinking hand of one of them who was scraping my gums with his filthy fingers, and crushed it thoroughly. This deterred the bystanders from my purchase, for they regarded me as having a savage temper. Then the crier, bellowing till he nearly burst his throat and his voice was crippled with hoarseness, began to devise the most absurd jests against my misfortunes. 'How long', he cried, 'am I to offer this beast for sale, this ancient ass whose hoofs are worn to the quick till he can scarcely stand, whose skin is perished with his pain, who has a vile temper in addition to his slowness and stupidity, and might in fact be called no better than a sieve for rubbish? Will nobody buy? Well then, let us give him to any one who doesn't mind losing his hay.'

24 In such wise did the crier stir the bystanders to laughter. But that cruel Fortune of mine, whom I could not escape though I fled from place to place, nor appease by all the woes I had already suffered, once more cast her blind eyes upon me, and by a wonderful stroke of genius discovered a purchaser for me wholly in keeping with my hapless state. Hear what he was! An old baldheaded bawd, with grizzled curls that hung all round his head, one of those offscourings of the people, those guttersnipes that go round the streets from town to town banging cymbals and castanets, and carrying with them the Syrian goddess whom they force to beg their bread for them. He was extraordinarily eager to buy me and asked the

crier whence I came. He replied that I came from Cappadocia, and was a good strong ass. The old fellow then asked my age. The crier, who was a merry fellow, replied, 'An astrologer who took his horoscope warrants him to be five years old, but as to his birth-certificate he knows best himself. I know I am making myself liable to arrest under the Cornelian law in selling you a Roman citizen as a slave, but come now, buy him ; he'll be a good honest servant who will be a help to you indoors and out.' However, my tiresome purchaser kept on asking one thing after another, and finally inquired as to my temper. The 25 crier replied, 'He's a regular sheep, not an ass at all, quiet to ride and drive, will not bite or kick—why, you would think he had a good sensible man inside his skin !'

In such manner did the crier banter the old ruffian. But he, when he saw that he was being mocked, made a great show of indignation and cried, 'Oh ! you deaf and dumb carcase, you crazy crier, may the Goddess of Syria, the all-powerful, the all-mother, and the holy Sabadius and Bellona, and the mother of Mount Ida, and our lady Venus and her beloved Adonis strike you blind for all these rascally jests with which you have been making such play against me this long time past ! Do you think, you fool, that I can entrust the goddess to a savage ass for him to kick off the divine image all of a sudden, and force me, poor wretch, to go rushing about with hair dishevelled and looking for some doctor to patch up my poor goddess who is lying on the ground ?'

When I heard his words, I thought of plunging forward suddenly as if I was mad, so that he might see how fierce I was when I was roused, and might desist from his purchase. But my buyer was so anxious to get me that he outstripped my purpose, and straightway paid down seventeen denarii, which my master took gladly enough, for he was sick to death of me. Without more ado he tied me with a grass halter and handed me over to Philebus, for such was the name of my new owner. He took his new servant and dragg'd 26 him home. Arrived there, he cried from the very threshold, 'My children, see what a beautiful slave I have bought you, and brought you.' His children were nothing more nor less than a band of eunuchs who forthwith lifted up their cracked and womanish voices in discordant cries of joy and exultation, thinking forsooth that it was a real slave that he had brought to wait on them. But when they saw, not as in the old tale a doe substituted for a girl, but an ass for a man, they turned up their noses and began to mock at their master. However, when they were tired of jesting they took me to my stall and tied me up.

27 Next day they arrayed themselves in robes of many colours, and daubed their faces hideously with some filthy pigment and smeared their eyes with paint. Then they went forth wearing turbans, and saffron cloaks, and raiment of linen and silk. Some were clad in white tunics dyed with purple stripes that ran lance-like in all directions. They had a girdle about their loins and yellow shoes upon their feet. They placed

the goddess, covered with a silken veil, upon my back and then, baring their arms to the shoulders and brandishing huge swords and axes, they leapt forth in revel rout, while the strains of the pipe maddened them to a maniac dance. After visiting not a few poor cottages, they came to a rich man's country house. The moment they entered it, they raised a chorus of discordant howls and rushed madly through all the house, with bowed heads and necks that writhed with snaky motion. They whirled their hanging curls, till they stood out in a circle, and ever and anon they bit their own sinews with their teeth. At last when they had done this for some time, they began each of them to slash their arms with the two-edged knives which they carried. Meanwhile one of them raved more wildly than the rest ; a deep and frequent panting, that seemed to come from his very heartstrings, burst from him, as though he were filled with the breath of some divinity, and he feigned a frenzy that racked his whole being. As if, forsooth, the presence of the gods instead of making men better were wont to make them feeble and sickly ! I would have 28 you note, moreover, what reward he won thereby from the providence of heaven. He began to utter noisy prophecies, to attack and upbraid himself with false accusations of having transgressed in some manner against the law of their holy faith ; he went further, he demanded that his own hands should exact the just penalty for his sin and wickedness. Then seizing the scourge, which these eunuch priests continually carry with them, and which is made of a large tassel of

long woollen strings, set at intervals with numerous knucklebones of sheep, he dealt himself the most savage blows from its knotted lashes. It was a marvel to see with what imperturbability he bore the pain of the blows. You might have seen the ground grow wet with the foul blood that flowed from these effeminate fellows, as they gashed themselves with swords or lashed themselves with the scourge. Indeed it filled me with no small solicitude to see such lavish effusion of blood from so many wounds. For I began to fear that the stomach of this strange goddess might have a craving for asses' blood, just as some men have a craving for asses' milk. But when at last they were worn out, or at least had enough of this self-inflicted torture, they gave pause to their butchery, and collected in the capacious folds of their robes the coins of bronze, aye and of silver, which the spectators vied in offering. They received also a jar of wine, milk, cheeses, some corn and fine wheaten meal, while there were also some persons who presented barley for him that carried the goddess. All these offerings they greedily swept together and, stuffing them into bags specially made to hold their gains, loaded them upon my back. As a result I carried a double load, and at one and the same time fulfilled the functions of a walking storehouse and a travelling shrine.

29 After this fashion they wandered from place to place and pillaged all the country-side. At last one day in a country town, where they had made more than their usual harvest, and were in merry humour over their

good fortune, they prepared a banquet to give expression to their joy. As a reward for some lying prophecy which they had fabricated for a certain farmer, they demanded a fat ram whose sacrifice should satisfy the hunger of the Syrian goddess. Then, after making careful preparation for the feast, they went to the baths and after they had washed sat down to the repast. They had scarcely tasted a few vegetables, before they began to give way to the most horrible debauchery. At last my eyes could bear the sight no longer, and I strove to cry, 'Ho! all ye citizens!' But all that came from my lips was the word 'Ho!' widowed of all the other letters and syllables. I cried it loudly and sturdily enough, in the best asses' manner, but at the most inopportune moment. For several youths from the neighbouring village, who were looking for a young donkey that had been stolen from them during the night, and were searching every house with quite unnecessary zeal, heard me braying within the house, and thinking that the stolen ass had been secretly concealed within doors decided to take the matter, which concerned them nearly, into their own hands, and broke into the house in a body without more ado. There they caught these fellows red-handed in the midst of their unspeakable debaucheries. Forthwith they summoned the neighbours from all round, revealed the horrid scene to the public gaze, and indulged in much sarcastic praise of the abstinence and chastity of the priests. The latter were filled with consternation at 30 the disgrace thus put upon them (for the fame of it

had spread rapidly abroad and brought upon them the hatred and loathing they deserved), collected all their goods, and secretly about midnight departed from the town. They covered a good part of their journey before dawn of day, and by the time the sun was high had reached a remote and lonely place. After long deliberation among themselves they prepared to put me to death. They removed the statue of the goddess from its place on my back and set it down upon the ground, stripped me of all my coverings and, tying me to an oak, began to beat me with that scourge, which consisted as I have said of a chain of sheep bones, till I was well-nigh dead. There was one of them who threatened to hough me with his axe for having so put him to shame; but the rest, moved not by any thought of my welfare but by the sight of the image lying on the ground, voted that I should be kept alive. So once more they piled my load upon me and, threatening me with the flat of their swords, proceeded till they came to a fine town. There the chief citizen of the place, who was in any case of a religious disposition and had a special reverence for the goddess, on hearing the tinkling of cymbals, the sound of timbrels and the soft strains of Phrygian melody, leapt up and ran forth to meet us. To give hospitality to the goddess was the crown of all his prayers; he welcomed her, and established her within the walls of his spacious house, and proceeded to appease the deity with rich victims and the most zealous worship.

31 Here, I remember, I was in great peril of my life;

a certain farmer had sent as a present to his master a portion of the spoils of the chase, in the shape of a fat haunch cut from a huge stag. This was hung carelessly behind the kitchen door at no great height from the ground, where it was attacked unnoticed by a dog whose sporting instincts were no less strong than those of the sender. Joyfully he seized his prey, and in a flash eluded the eyes of the guardians of the kitchen. When the loss was known, the cook was blamed for his negligence, and after long and useless weeping and lamentations, as his master became more and more urgent to have venison for his dinner, was seized with deep depression and ever-increasing fear. He kissed his little son and seizing a rope prepared to commit suicide by hanging. But his faithful wife failed not to mark her husband's desperate plight. Fiercely she caught the fatal knot with both her hands and cried, 'Has this mishap scared thee from thy wits and seest thou not the remedy which Fortune and the providence of heaven offer thee? If thou hast any sense left thee in this last whirlwind of fortune, listen attentively to me. Take that ass which has but newly arrived to some lonely place, kill him and cut off his haunch so that it resemble that which was lost; and when thou hast cooked it carefully with the most savoury sauces, serve it up to the master in place of the venison.' The abandoned scoundrel decided to secure his own safety by my death and, after heaping praises on the wisdom of his fellow-slave, began to sharpen the knives for the slaughter on which he had resolved.

BOOK IX

I THUS did that abandoned butcher arm his impious hands for my slaughter. But I, spurred to headlong counsels by the greatness and imminence of my peril, tarried not to deliberate, but resolved to evade my impending doom by flight. I broke the rope that tied me and rushed forth at a wild gallop as fast as my legs could carry me. To save my skin I lashed out continually with my heels and, after careering through a colonnade hard by, charged headlong into the dining-room, where the master of the house was supping with the priests at a feast supplied by the meat from the burnt-offering. My impetus was such that I collided with and upset many of the things that had been set out for the service of supper and even overturned the festive board itself. The head of the household was much upset by the horrid overthrow, denounced me as a troublesome and wanton creature, and handed me over to one of his servants, charging him strictly to keep me shut up somewhere to prevent my disturbing a peaceful party by a second outbreak of temper. Such was the ingenious device by which I secured my safety. Snatched from the very hands of the butcher, I rejoiced in the imprisonment which had saved me from death.

But in good truth, if Fortune say nay, no man born of woman may meet with prosperity, nor can wise counsel or sagacious remedy avail aught to turn aside or

alter the divine ordinance of all-seeing fate. And so it came about that that same stroke of cunning, which for the moment seemed to have won me safety, brought me once more into great peril, nay, into the very jaws of destruction. For suddenly a slave, wild with fear and ² with face that twitched for terror, burst into the dining-room, interrupting the flow of friendly conversation, and told his master that a few minutes previously a mad bitch from the neighbouring alley had rushed into the house by the back door with extraordinary violence, and attacked the hounds kept for the chase with fiery fury. It had then run into the stables close by, and there with like madness attacked a number of horses, while it had ended by directing its attention to men as well. Myrtilus the muleteer, Hephaestion the cook, Hypataeus the servant in charge of the bedchambers, Apollonius the doctor, and others of the household, who attempted to drive it away, had each of them been torn by its bite, and certain of the horses at any rate had already gone mad, infected by its poisonous fangs. The news struck all of them with dismay. They thought that my madness must be due to infection with the same plague that had afflicted the other beasts and, seizing any weapons that were handy, they exhorted one another to beat off the destruction that threatened them all, and proceeded to attack me, though assuredly they were mad rather than I. Without doubt they would have hewn me limb from limb with the lances and hunting-spears, aye, and the axes too, with which the servants were only too ready to supply them, had not

I, seeing what a welter of calamity was come about me, burst forthwith into the bedchamber occupied by my masters. The doors were shut and barred upon me, and they set themselves to besiege the place until the incurable madness of my mortal malady should have consumed and slain me without exposing them to the risks of an encounter. Thus at last I found myself at liberty, I welcomed the boon of solitude that Fortune had conferred on me, and casting myself down on a well-made bed, enjoyed sleep like a man for the first 3 time after many days. It was high day when I arose, nimble and refreshed by the softness of the couch. I heard my guards, who had kept watch all night to prevent my escape, discussing my fate among themselves as follows: 'Do you think that wretched ass continues to be as mad as ever?' 'No, the increasing violence of the poison must have killed him.' To put an end to these differences of opinion they resolved to spy out the land and looking through a chink in the door they saw me standing quietly, unharmed and in my right mind. At that they opened the door and sought to assure themselves more fully as to whether I was yet tame. But one of them, truly a saviour sent from heaven, showed the others a sure test whereby they might ascertain whether I were sane or no. He bade them fill a pail with fresh water and offer it me to drink; if I took it as usual without sign of fear and seemed to enjoy it, they might regard it as certain that I was sane and free from all taint of disease; if on the other hand I shrank back at the sight and touch of the

water, they might be sure that the deadly madness still persisted ; these were the precautions recommended in ancient books, and usually observed in such cases. They decided to do as he proposed and hastily filled a ⁴ large bowl with clear water from a neighbouring spring, and offered it me with timorous hesitation. I made no delay, but even came forward to meet them. Greedily I stooped my neck and thrusting my whole head into the vessel drained the water, which was in truth for me the water of salvation. They patted me with their hands, they stroked my ears and pulled my halter, without this or any of the other tests to which they subjected me causing me to show the least perturbation, until at last I proved clearly to them all that, contrary to their insane expectations, I was perfectly under control.

The day after my escape from this double danger in the manner described, I was loaded once again with the holy emblems, and led forth into the road to the sound of castanets and cymbals, to go my round begging from marketplace to marketplace. At last, after visiting many cottages and hamlets, we came to a village half-hidden in the crumbling ruins of what had once—so the inhabitants told us—been a wealthy town. There these immaculate priests stayed for some days, ⁸ and after battenning on the munificence of the public, and being crammed almost to bursting with the rewards lavished on them for their prophecies, devised a new method of filling their pockets. They selected one single response, such as would suit most events, and to

the crowds which came to consult them on various subjects they gave the following response—with their tongue in their cheeks. The oracle was as follows:—

*With oxen yoked men plough the stubborn soil,
That fertile harvests may reward their toil.*

Then if any came to inquire of the oracle whether he should marry, they said that this response was quite conclusive, for it meant that they should lie yoked in wedlock to produce fertile harvests of children. If a man inquired whether he should buy a property, they replied that the oracle had good reason for mentioning oxen and the yoke and fields rich in increase. If one who was doubtful whether to set forth on a journey sought the divine sanction, they answered that the mildest of all four-footed beasts were already yoked to convey him, while the mention of the fruits of the soil promised him profit. Did one who contemplated going to the wars or the pursuit of a band of robbers inquire whether his expedition would prosper, they argued that the oracle most clearly presaged victory, for they would subdue their foemens' necks to the yoke, and win plenteous and rich booty from their spoils.

9 By this humorous and ingenious method of divination they scraped together no small amount of money. But at last, after having given this answer to continuous inquiries till they wearied of the jest, they once more set out upon their journeyings. The road was far worse than any portion of that which we had traversed by night, for now it was full of pits and gaping ditches,

now ran through swampy and quaking bogs, and now was slippery with muddy slime. I stumbled so frequently, and fell so often, that my legs were terribly bruised, and it was only after a long struggle, and scarce even then, that I emerged wearily on to a level road again. And then, lo and behold ! a number of armed men with javelins in their hands, and mounted on horses, rushed upon us so fiercely that it was with difficulty that they reined in the wild onset of their charging steeds. They attacked Philebus and his colleagues with the greatest vigour, seized them by the throats, and calling them foul and sacrilegious knaves, pummelled them from time to time with their fists. They put handcuffs also upon all of them, and with angry voices commanded them not once, but again and again, to produce the golden cup, the prize that had lured them to their crime, the cup which under pretence of performing certain secret rites they had stolen away from the very shrine of the Mother of the Gods, and then, thinking to evade punishment for so foul a crime by a stealthy departure, had crossed the city boundaries in the twilight of dawn. Finally one man laid hands 10 upon my back and, searching in the very bosom of the goddess whom I carried, pulled forth the cup of gold. Not even the evidence of their nefarious deed availed to abash or terrify these filthy fellows, but they began to jest with lying laughter: 'It is a cruel injustice', they cried, 'such as is only too often the fate of innocent men! Just for the sake of one tiny cup, presented by the Mother of the Gods to her sister the Syrian

Goddess, as a gift from host to guest, the priests of the faith are summoned like criminals to be tried for their lives!"

But it was in vain they stammered out these trashy excuses and the like. For the villagers led them back and forthwith cast them bound into the prison, while the cup and the image which I carried were duly placed in the treasury of the temple and dedicated to its service. On the next day I was taken out, and once more put up for sale by the voice of the crier. A miller from a neighbouring township bought me for seven pieces more than Philebus had given for me, and straightway loading me with the corn he had bought, drove me up a steep road beset with sharp stones and all manner of snags, till we came to the mill which he worked.

II There several beasts rotated incessantly, turning mills of various sizes and, not by day alone, but all night long, unsleeping ground meal in those revolving engines that spun without rest. But I, presumably that I might not be alarmed by my introduction to a service that was strange to me, was placed by my new owner with every show of courtesy in most luxurious quarters. For he gave me a complete respite from work on the first day, and placed abundance of food in my stall. But these luxuries of leisure and fodder lasted no longer, for on the very next day I was led betimes to what seemed to me to be the largest of the mills, a bandage was placed over my eyes, and I was compelled to follow the circular channel of a curved track, so that

my feet passed and repassed the same spot continually as I revolved, and I went blindly on in a path that allowed no wandering from the way. However, I used my intelligence and kept my wits about me, and was in no hurry to show myself a willing servant in my new task. On the contrary, although when I moved as a man among men I had often seen similar machines revolving, I feigned the stupefaction of one ignorant and unskilled in the work set before him, and stood motionless. For I thought that if I showed myself ill-suited and useless for this sort of work, I should be assigned to some other lighter labour or else have a lazy life with plenty of good food. But my shrewdness was in vain and turned to my hurt. For several fellows armed with sticks promptly surrounded me and, as I stood unsuspecting with bandaged eyes, suddenly at a given signal raised a loud shout all together and, raining showers of blows upon me, so confused me by their uproar, that I threw all my designs to the winds and began to tug at my grass rope and to perform my journey with alacrity. My conversion was so sudden, that it stirred all present to laughter.

When the day was well-nigh spent and I was quite 12 worn out, they unfastened my grass tow-rope, and freeing me from my attachment to the machine, took me to my stall. But although I was very weary and sore in need of refreshment for my strength, and quite faint with hunger, I was absorbed by my usual curiosity and, neglecting the plentiful supply of food that was placed before me, anxiously, yet with a certain delight,

observed the way in which that loathsome workshop was conducted. Good heavens! what stunted little men met my eye, their skin all striped with livid scars, their backs a mass of sores, with tattered patchwork clothing that gave them shade rather than covering! Some of them even were naked save for a small loin-cloth, but there was not a man among them all but was clad in such a manner that his body showed through his wretched rags. Letters were branded on their foreheads, their heads were half shaven, iron rings were welded about their ankles, they were hideously pale, and the smoky darkness of that steaming gloomy den had ulcerated their eyelids; their sight was impaired and their bodies smeared and filthy white with the powdered meal, making them look like boxers who 13sprinkle themselves with dust before they fight. And what am I to say about the beasts that were my companions in the stable, and how can I say it? What miserable old mules were there! what decrepit pack-horses! They stood round about the stall with drooped heads, devouring great heaps of straw, their necks swollen with gangrenes and putrid sores, their nostrils slack and panting with the harsh cough that continually racked them, their breasts ulcerated by the ceaseless rubbing of their hempen harness, their hoofs swollen to an enormous size as a result of their long journeys round the mill, their ribs laid bare even to the bone by their endless floggings, and all their hides rough with the scab of neglect and decay. The sight of my fellow-servants filled me with gloomy fore-

bodings. I remembered the Lucius that once was. I had been thrust to the last verge of safety and bowed my head and wept. Nowhere was there aught that could solace my life of agony, save that my innate curiosity served to cheer me. For everybody did and said freely what they pleased in my presence, since they took no notice of me. Verily, the divine old poet of Greece spoke truth when, desiring to describe a man made perfect in wisdom, he sung of one who had attained to the highest degree of wisdom by visiting many cities and diverse peoples. Nay, I was even grateful to my asshood, since by concealing me within its hide, and schooling me with all the changes of fortune, it had made me perhaps less wise, but certainly had given me a wider range of experience. As a result I have an unusually good story to tell you, a pretty tale which will amuse you. See, I will begin.

The miller who had purchased me was a most 14 excellent fellow of a very modest disposition ; but the wife who had fallen to his lot was without exception the worst of women and brought his house and bed into the worst dishonour, so that by heaven I often wept in silence for his misfortune. There was not a single vice lacking to this woman ; every outrageous sin had found harbourage in the filthy cesspool of her soul. She was cruel, perverse, venomous, drunken, obstinate, and self-willed ; of the meanest and most grasping avarice, extravagant in the gratification of her filthy pleasures, an enemy to truth and a foe to chastity. She despised and spurned all the gods in

heaven and, instead of holding any definite faith, blasphemously and falsely proclaimed that she believed in one sole god. She deceived all men by her hypocritical piety and, hoodwinking her wretched husband, gave herself up to tippling from morn to night and 15 continual wantonness. Such being her character, she persecuted me with the most extraordinary hatred. For even before break of day, while she was still in bed, she would cry that the new ass should be yoked to the mill; while the moment she had left her chamber, she would command—and brook no denial—that I should be flogged in her presence with as many stripes as I could bear. And whereas the other beasts were given the respite of the midday meal in good time, she would not allow me to be taken to my stall till much later. This cruelty of hers still further inflamed my natural curiosity as to her character. For I noticed that she received exceedingly frequent visits from a young man, whose face I longed eagerly to see, if only the bandage over my eyes had given them the requisite freedom. For assuredly my wits would somehow or other have been equal to discovering the crimes of that wicked woman. But there was a certain old hag who was her inseparable companion from morn to eve, and seemed to serve as go-between in her love affairs. After they had as a preliminary breakfasted together and pledged each other in cups of wine—wine, I should observe, without any admixture of water—this beldame would devise many cunning schemes and ingenious plots for the undoing of the wretched

husband. And I, angry as I was at Fotis's mistake in turning me into an ass when she meant to make me a bird, derived this sole comfort from my woful transformation, that I possessed enormous ears which enabled me to hear everything that was said with the greatest ease, even if the speakers were some way off. At last one day I heard this shameless old woman 22 saying, 'I'll bring the young man here soon enough.' Then, promising to return in the evening, she left the room. The miller's chaste spouse forthwith prepared a banquet worthy of the 'leaping priests' of Mars, strained some costly wine and cooked fresh dainties in savoury gravies. Then when at last the table was spread with a royal feast, she awaited her lover's coming as it were the epiphany of a god. For it fell out by the greatest good chance that her husband was dining out with a fuller who lived close by. At last as day wore to a close, I was free from my tow-rope and permitted to repose myself, lightened from my load of care. But glad as I was to be released from my labours, by heaven, I can assure you, I congratulated myself much more on having my eyes unbandaged and free to behold all the misdeeds of that abandoned woman. The sun had already sunk in ocean and was giving light to the antipodes, when the wicked old hag returned, the lover at her side. The miller's wife welcomed him with many kisses and bade him sit down at the supper she had made ready for him. But the young man's lips 23 had scarce taken their first sip of wine or first taste of meat when the husband arrived far earlier than had

been expected. Thereupon his excellent wife launched deep and dark curses on his head and, praying he might break his legs, hid her lover, who was trembling and pale with fear, beneath a wooden trough which chanced to be near and was used for the purpose of cleaning the unsifted corn. Having thus by her native cunning concealed all traces of her offence, she assumed an unruffled mien and asked her husband why he had left the dinner provided by so dear a friend and come home so early. The miller sighed a deep sigh of sorrow and replied, 'His worthless wife committed a crime so horrible and abominable that I could not endure it and fled the house. Good God! What a good wife she was to him, how faithful and modest, and what deep dishonour she has brought upon herself! By the goddess of corn yonder, I swear to you, even now I cannot believe my eyes that such a woman should have

24 done such a thing.' The shameless wife's curiosity was kindled by these words of her husband. She longed to hear the whole story and deafened him with continuous entreaties that he would tell her what had happened from the very beginning. Nor did she desist till her husband yielded to her will and told the following tale of his neighbour's misfortunes, in utter ignorance of his own. 'The wife of my friend the fuller, whom I had always thought a most respectable woman and whom public renown extolled as a model housewife, suddenly became infatuated with a secret passion for a young man from whom she received frequent visits. Indeed, at that very moment when we returned from the bath to dine, she was entertaining the youth at home.

Dismayed by our sudden arrival, she took instant counsel with herself and hid him within a wicker frame built of thin withies and of considerable height, round which linen was hung to be bleached with the white fumes of sulphur. Having hidden him there as she thought in a perfectly secure retreat, she sat down at table with us without the slightest show of concern. Meanwhile the youth swallowed the pungent suffocating fumes of the sulphur and began to faint and swoon for want of breath ; moreover, the potency of the mineral produced the usual result, a succession of violent sneezes. The moment 25 the husband heard the sound of the sneeze, which proceeded from somewhere behind his wife's back, he cried, "God bless you !" as usual ; for he thought that the sneeze was hers. A second sneeze ! "God bless you !" he says again. A third, a fourth sneeze, and many more, and for each sneeze a "God bless you !" until this excess of sneezes began to disturb him and he suspected the truth. Straightway thrusting the table from him he lifted up the wicker frame and dragged out the young man, who was panting hard, with gasps that came quick and thick. Furious with indignation at his dishonour, he called for a sword to slay the swooning wretch, who would assuredly have perished had I not seen the danger that threatened us all and restrained my friend, though with difficulty, from his mad onslaught, assuring him that his enemy would in a few minutes be a dead man thanks to the potency of the sulphur without our having his blood on our hands. My words had but little effect, but he yielded to the necessities of the situation, abated his fury, and

carried the youth, already half-dead, into the neighbouring alley. I next advised and succeeded in persuading his wife to leave the shop for a while and live in seclusion with one of her friends, until in course of time the husband's fury should have subsided. For he was a prey to such passionate frenzy that without doubt he had dark designs both on his wife's life and his own. Such was the dinner my friend gave me. It disgusted me so much that I fled and returned home.'

26 While the miller told his story, his wanton and shameless wife, who was an old hand herself, kept expressing her detestation of the fuller's wife in the bitterest language: 'Oh! the faithless wanton jade', she cried, 'she has shamed the whole race of women, she has sacrificed her own honour, spurned the sanctity of marriage, and made her husband's house into a house of shame. Such women,' she added, 'should be burnt alive.' Nevertheless, deep in her heart she felt the torment of a guilty conscience and in order the sooner to free her lover from the discomforts of his hiding-place, she kept urging her husband to go to bed betimes. But he, having fled the fuller's house in the middle of his dinner, was very hungry and replied cheerfully, 'It's meat, not sleep I want.' His wife made no refusal, but set food before him, though she grudged it, for it was meant for another. As for me, my spirit was sorely troubled: I was moved to anger when I thought of this wretched woman's past offence and present effrontery. I pondered anxiously in my heart by what means I might help my master by exposing

and laying bare all her deceit and might reveal the youth to all the world by the removal of the shelter beneath which he lay like a tortoise in its shell. While 27 I vexed my soul with the thought of the outrage put upon my master's honour, the providence of heaven at length deigned to smile upon me. The time had come to give us water, and a lame old man, to whose charge we had been committed, drove out myself and all the other cattle in a herd, that we might quench our thirst in a neighbouring pond. This gave me the chance of effecting the vengeance I had so long desired. For as I passed, I noticed the tips of the lover's fingers projecting through the narrow space that separated his hollow shelter from the ground. I promptly planted the edge of my hoof upon them as viciously as I could and crushed them till they were bruised to pulp. The pain was too great for him to bear, he uttered a cry of woe, thrust back and overturned the trough and exposed the mysteries of that shameful woman to the gaze of the profane world. 28 The miller called two of the sturdiest of his slaves, had the youth horsed, gave him a good flogging and turned him out of doors. He departed weeping, but the miller, not satisfied by his revenge, sent a message to his wife and forthwith expelled her from his house. The woman, however, 29 whose natural wickedness was further aggravated by the affront she had suffered, though she had only met with her desert, returned to her old tricks and nerved herself for the practice of those arts so dear to her sex. She sought out a certain cunning woman, who was

believed to be able to effect absolutely anything by means of her sorceries and magical curses, besieged her with many entreaties and loaded her with many gifts, begging her to do one of two things, either to appease her husband and reconcile him to her, or else, if that was out of the question, to launch some goblin or fury upon him that should tear the life from him with violence. Thereupon the sorceress, whose power could compel even the gods to do her will, made play with the first weapons of her wicked art and strove to bend and constrain the heart of the grievously offended husband to love his wife once more. This attempt, however, met with less success than she expected. Wherefore she was filled with anger against her gods and, fired not only by the thought of the payment promised as a reward for her pains, but by the disdain which had mocked her efforts, began to threaten the hapless husband's life and evoking the spirit of a 30 murdered woman urged her to slay him. But, critical reader, thou wilt perchance take exception to my story and object, 'How, my most cunning ass, seeing that you were confined within the four walls of the miller's house, did you succeed in discovering, as you claim to have discovered, what these women did in secret?' Well, thou shalt hear how one of curious disposition like myself came, though disguised as a mere beast of burden, to know of the plots laid against the life of my master the miller. About midday a woman suddenly appeared in the mill. She was clad in the garb of mourning worn by persons accused of some crime; her

face was strangely disfigured by grief, while her raiment hardly covered her and consisted of deplorable shreds and patches. Her feet were naked and unshod, her countenance hideously thin and pale as boxwood, and her grizzled hair was torn and foully besprinkled with ashes and hung over her forehead so as to cover the greater part of her face. She laid her hand upon the miller as though she would speak to him in private, and led him to his chamber, where she remained for a long time within closed doors. When all the corn which had been delivered into the hands of the workmen was ground, and it became necessary to get some more, the wretched slaves approached the bedchamber and called their master demanding more grist for the mill. But though they cried long and loud, their master answered them not at all. So they began to beat upon the door with some violence. The care with which it was bolted excited their worst suspicions, and at last with a great effort they wrenched back or broke the hinges and forced an entrance. Within they found no traces of the woman, but beheld their master hanging lifeless from a beam to which he was suspended. They loosed him from the noose and took him down to the sound of loud and grievous lamentation. Then they washed the body for the last time and, after performing all the last offices, escorted him to the tomb in a long procession and committed him to the grave.

On the next day his daughter arrived in haste from 31 a neighbouring town, where she had married some time previously. She was plunged in grief, she tore

her hair, which hung loose about her, and ever and again beat her breast with her fists. She had learned of all the misfortunes that had befallen her family, though none had told her the news; but her father had appeared to her in sleep, weeping, with the rope still tight about his throat, and had told her all her step-mother's crime, her faithlessness, her use of the black art, and the manner of the death that had sent him as a ghost to dwell in the world below. Long and anguished was her weeping for his fate, but at last her servants gathered about her and forced her to give pause to her grief. At length, when the ninth day came and all the rites of funeral had been duly performed at the tomb, she had the slaves and furniture and all the beasts of burden put up to auction for the benefit of the heirs. And so the freakish chances of the sale, chances that none can forecast, dispersed the household, that had been one, to different masters. I myself was bought by a poor gardener for fifty sesterces. It was a large sum, he said, but such division of labour would help him to gain his livelihood.

32 It is, I think, well that I should tell you the tasks imposed upon me by my new servitude.

My master used to load me at dawn with quantities of vegetables and then, leading me to a neighbouring town, would sell his produce to such as might buy. He then mounted my back and returned to his garden. While he dug or watered his land or bowed his back in other laborious occupations, I took my pleasure in placid ease. But lo! as the days and months wore on

and the stars spun round in their appointed courses, autumn and the joys of vintage passed and the year once more drew nigh the wintry frosts of Capricorn. The stall in which I was confined was roofless and open to the sky, the rain fell unceasingly, and the nights discharged their dew upon me, so that I was everlastingly tormented with the cold. For my master was so very poor that he provided no straw nor even the least covering either for me or for himself, but lived contentedly under the shelter of a booth of leafy boughs. Moreover I had to struggle out every day at dawn, trampling frozen mud and sharp splinters of ice with my unshod feet, and even then I could not fill my belly with its accustomed food. For my master and myself had exactly the same fare for supper, and very scanty it was. It consisted of those ancient and unsavoury lettuces which, when old age comes upon them and they have run to seed, grow so unreasonably tall that they look like brooms, while their fibres rot and are filled with a bitter muddy juice.

One night a householder from a neighbouring village 33 lost his way in the darkness of a moonless night and, since he was drenched with heavy rain, and circumstances made it impossible for him to proceed upon his journey, turned his weary horse to our small garden. He was given as courteous a welcome as the resources of the house permitted, and provided with a bed, which, if not luxurious, was at any rate indispensable. Desirous to reward his kind host, the stranger promised to give him some corn and oil from his farm and two jars of

wine to boot. My master made no delay, but taking a small sack and two empty wineskins mounted me bareback and set forth upon the journey, a matter of sixty furlongs or so. After covering this distance we reached the said estate and my master was promptly entertained with an excellent repast by his courteous guest. While they were drinking to each other's health, a wondrous portent occurred. One of the hens suddenly ran across the middle of the yard and began to cluck loudly, exactly as if she desired to lay an egg. Her master looked at her and said, 'Most excellent and fruitful handmaiden, thou hast fed me this long time past with an egg laid every day, and even now, as I see, thou art preparing a fresh dainty for me.' Then, 'Boy,' he cried, 'put the basket kept for the hen's eggs in its usual place.' The boy did as he was bid, but the hen spurned her usual bed and even at her master's feet brought forth her untimely offspring, which was moreover of a nature to cause the most lively concern. For it was not the familiar egg that appeared on the scene, but a perfect chicken, wings, claws, eyes, and voice complete, which began to follow its mother about the instant it was born.

34 Nor was this all; there followed a far greater portent which deservedly created the greatest terror in all beholders. Just beneath the table which carried the remains of the repast there opened a bottomless abyss, from which a copious stream of blood spurted forth, so that large drops splashed up and sprinkled the table with gore. And at that very moment, while all

were struck dumb with wonder and terror at these divine warnings, a servant came running from the wine-cellar with the news that all the wine long since bottled was bubbling and boiling hot in every jar, as though it had a large fire under it. Meanwhile a weasel also was seen dragging a dead serpent out of doors in its teeth, a green frog leapt from the mouth of a sheepdog, and the dog himself was attacked by a ram standing near us, which tore open his throat with a single bite.

So many frightful portents struck the most appalling fear into the hearts of the master and his household and filled them with the most profound dejection and perplexity. The wrath of the gods in heaven must be appeased, but what was to be their procedure? what remedy would be most likely to meet the case? what number and what kind of victims should they sacrifice to effect their purpose? They were still paralyzed with 35 the expectation of some ghastly calamity, when a young slave ran up to report that a great and irretrievable disaster had befallen the wealthy farmer.

He had three grown-up sons, well-educated and of the highest character, and they were the pride of his life. These young men were united by long ties of intimacy with a poor man who lived in a small cottage. Now this cottage chanced to be situated on the borders of a large and fertile estate owned by a young man of great influence and wealth. But he made but evil use of his high birth and distinguished ancestry, for he was ever foremost in party strife and did what he pleased in the district. He made continual raids on his poor

neighbour's humble estate, killing his flocks, driving away his oxen, and trampling down his unripe crops. At last, when he had despoiled him of all that his thrift had won, he resolved to dispossess him of his scanty acres and, inventing a fictitious quarrel over the boundaries of their lands, claimed the whole property for himself. At that the rustic, who was a man of the most respectable character, since he had already suffered from the depredations of his rich and avaricious neighbour, resolved to maintain possession of his father's fields, if only that he might be buried there when his time came. He therefore called together a large number of his friends to give evidence as to his boundaries, for he was a prey to the liveliest terror as to what might ensue. Among others came the three brothers I have mentioned, for they wished, as far as in them lay, to help their friend in his distress. They might be able to do but little, but they would do their best.

36 However, the presence of such a number of citizens had no effect on his furious adversary, who showed neither fear nor confusion, and refused to moderate either his designs of plunder or the violence of his language. His opponents expostulated gently with him and strove to assuage the fierceness of his temper by flattery. But suddenly he burst forth, 'By my life and by the life of all I hold dear, I care not a fig how many peacemakers you may have got here. My servants are going to take our neighbour by the ear and fling him without more ado as far as they can from his

cottage door.' At these words all that heard him were stirred with the most violent indignation. Without a moment's hesitation one of the three brothers made answer very boldly: 'You trust in your wealth, but it will serve you little, and vain are the threats of your tyrannic insolence. For the law is no respecter of persons and will protect the poor against the brutality of the rich.' The effect of these words was like oil poured upon fire, as sulphur in a burning house, or as the scourge in the hands of a Fury. They served in fact only to give nourishment to the fellow's anger. He became beside himself with rage, and cried that he would have them hanged and their laws with them!

Forthwith, crying 'At them! make an end of them!' he ordered his dogs to be turned loose upon them. They were great sheep-dogs from the farm, as large as they were savage, accustomed to gnaw carion that had been thrown out into the fields and trained even to bite passers-by without discrimination. The shepherds gave the usual signal, the beasts' tempers were kindled to anger at the sound, mad rage spurred them on, and baying discordantly they made an alarming attack on the men, biting them now here, now there, till they were all torn and mangled. Flight was of no avail; the dogs merely pursued with added fury. In 37 the midst of the weltering confusion into which the crowd was thrown by this murderous attack, the youngest of the three brothers caught his toes against a stone, tripped and fell to earth, there to provide

a ghastly banquet for the fury of those most savage hounds. At once they seized their prey and tore the unhappy young man into pieces even where he lay. When the two brothers heard his death-cry, they were filled with grief and ran up to aid him. Wrapping their left hands in their cloaks, they strove to defend their brother by driving off the dogs with showers of stones. But all their efforts failed to crush or quell their ferocity. For the young man had only time to utter these last words, ‘Take vengeance on that rich villain for your younger brother’s death.’ And with the words he died, torn limb from limb. The brothers, regardless of their own safety—it was not that they despaired of escape, but that they had lost all desire to live—rushed upon the rich man and with dauntless and frenzied courage assailed him with showers of stones. But he—for he was a bloody murderer and well versed in such crimes—hurled his spear and transfixed one of them through the midst of his breast. But the youth, though slain and quite lifeless, did not fall to the ground. For the weapon passed through him so that the greater part of it stood out behind his back, and by reason of the very force of the cast stuck in the soil and balanced the corpse upon its shaft in mid air. Meanwhile a tall and sturdy young slave came to the murderer’s aid, and casting a stone at long range hit the third brother on the right arm. But the stone, to the surprise of all beholders, did but graze the tips of his fingers and fell spent and harmless to the ground. The young man took cunning advantage of the occasion which this

lucky chance offered him for vengeance. Pretending that his hand was crippled, he called to the brutal youth: 'Rejoice, for you have slain all our family! Glut your insatiate cruelty with the blood of three brothers and triumph in the overthrow of your fellow-citizens. For this right hand of mine, which should have lopped your head from your shoulders, is maimed and crippled by unkind fate. But know this: even though you rob this poor fellow of his possessions and extend your borders indefinitely, you will still have some neighbour or other.'

These words exasperated the furious ruffian, and seizing his sword he rushed upon the hapless youth, eager to slay him with his own hand. But he had challenged one that was as fierce as himself. The youth offered unexpected resistance, far other than he hoped, and catching his right hand in an iron grip, wrested¹ away the sword with a mighty effort and with blows redoubled again and again drove the rich man's crime-stained spirit from its tenement. Then to free himself from the power of the slaves, who ran up to assist their master, he made no delay, but cut his own throat with the blade that still reeked with his foeman's blood.

Such were the events presaged by those portentous prodigies, such was the news brought to the unhappy master of the house. Caught in such a maze of woe, the old man spoke no word nor even wept in silent grief, but seizing the knife with which he had just

¹ *ei erepto* (Bluemner).

divided the cheese and the other portions of the meal among his guests, he straightway followed the example of his unhappy son and gashed his throat with repeated blows, until he fell backwards over the table and washed away the stains of the miraculous blood with the fresh flood of his own gore.

39 In such manner in a brief instant of time was that house brought to ruin. The gardener bewailed its overthrow, and bitterly mourning his own ill luck paid for his meal with the tribute of his tears. Then ever and again smiting together his hands that went empty away, he mounted on my back and returned by the way we had come. But even his homegoing was attended with misfortunes. For we met a tall fellow whom both his bearing and his accoutrements proclaimed to be a legionary. With proud and arrogant words he asked, 'Where are you taking that ass with never a load upon his back?' My master, who was still dazed with grief and was moreover ignorant of the Latin tongue, would have passed on without a word. But the soldier could not control his native insolence, and was as angry at his silence as if it had been an insult. With one sound blow from the vinestaff which he carried he knocked him off my back. Then at last the gardener answered in suppliant tones that he knew no Latin and had not understood what was said to him. Whereupon the soldier repeated his question in Greek, 'Where are you taking that ass?' 'To yonder town', replied the gardener. 'Nay', said the other, 'I have need of his services; he must carry my captain's

baggage from yonder town along with the other beasts.' With the words he laid hands upon the thong by which I was being led, seized me and began to drag me after him. But the gardener, wiping the blood away that streamed from his head as the result of the wound he had just received, once more besought his assailant. 'My good comrade', he said, 'be kind and have pity on me.' Then, adjuring him as he hoped for success in all his enterprises, he added, 'That wretched ass, for all that he is a lazy brute, has got a nasty temper and, what is worse, suffers from a cursed complaint. He can scarcely carry a few handfuls of vegetables from my garden hard by without falling weary and panting as though he would drop. Much less is he capable of carrying a heavier burden.' But when he saw that, far 40 from causing the soldier to relent, his prayers merely exasperated him to such an extent that he shifted his grip to the bottom of the vinestaff and was preparing to dash out his brains with the heavy knob at the handle, my master resorted to a desperate remedy. Feigning that he sought to move the soldier's pity by clasping his hands about his knees, he bowed himself humbly to the ground and then suddenly seizing both his feet lifted him high in air and dashed him heavily to the earth. Then with fists, elbows, teeth, and even with a stone which he snatched from the road, he began to batter his face and hands and sides all over. The other, the moment he was laid upon the ground on his back, was incapable of resistance and even of self-defence, but threatened again and again

that if he could once get up he would cut him into mincemeat with his sword. The gardener took warning at his words, snatched the sabre and flinging it as far away as he could, once more assailed him with blows yet fiercer than before. His victim lay prostrate and was prevented by his wounds from finding any means of safety. So at last he adopted the only course that was left him and feigned death. Thereupon the gardener mounted me once more and taking the sword with him hastened at top speed the shortest way to the town. As it was out of the question to go to his garden, he took refuge in the house of one of his friends. Having told all his tale, he besought his friend to help him in his peril and to hide himself and his ass for awhile, until after two or three days' concealment the danger to his life should have passed by. The other, remembering his long-standing friendship, received him into his house. My feet were tied together and I was hauled upstairs to an upper room, while the gardener remained downstairs in the shop itself and crept into a chest. The lid was closed and there he lay concealed.

41 But the soldier, as I afterwards learned, like one that has just wakened from a drunken stupor, went reeling and limping with the pain of his numerous wounds, scarce able to support himself even with the aid of his staff, till he reached the city. He was ashamed to tell any one of the citizens of his outrageous insolence and his ignominious defeat, but brooded in silence on his wrongs, till he found some of his comrades-in-arms and

told them all his woes. It was resolved that he should conceal himself for awhile in their quarters. For quite apart from the insult to his honour, the loss of his sword was a breach of his military oath and caused him much disquietude. His comrades also promised that meanwhile they would discover our tracks and devote their energies to hunting us down and taking vengeance upon us. In this they were assisted by a treacherous neighbour, who told them where we were hidden. Then the soldier's comrades summoned the magistrates and laid false information against us to the effect that they had lost a silver vase upon the road which was of great value and belonged to their commander, and that a certain gardener had picked it up and refused to restore it, but had taken refuge in a friend's house where he lay concealed. The magistrates, at the mention of the officer's name and the loss which he had sustained, straightway came to the door of our lodging and in a loud voice bade our host surrender us; for it was known for certain that he was hiding us in his house; if he refused, he did so at his own peril! He showed no trace of dismay, but sought only to save him to whom he had promised protection. He said nothing about us, and insisted that he had not seen the gardener in question for a good many days. On the other side the soldiers swore that he was hidden there and nowhere else, and cried, 'Open, in the emperor's name!' At last the magistrates resolved to expose his obstinate denials by making a search. The lictors and other public officers were sent into the house and bidden to

search every corner with the utmost care. They reported that they could find no one, not even the ass himself. Thereupon the dispute waxed yet fiercer on either 42 side. The soldiers asserted that they had absolutely certain information as to our whereabouts, and appealed again and again to the emperor's name. Our host on the other hand denied the charge, and continually called the gods to witness that he spoke the truth. When I heard the noise and uproar of the quarrel, being an ass of a most curious disposition and endued with the most restless indiscretion, I stuck out my head slantwise through a small window and sought to discover what the tumult might mean. But one of the soldiers chanced to turn his eyes to one side and caught sight of my shadow. Whereupon he called all the others to the spot to bear witness. A great uproar arose, they rushed upstairs, laid hands on me, and dragged me downstairs as a prisoner. Then without a moment's delay they searched everything even more carefully than before. Among other things they opened the chest, found the wretched gardener, dragged him out and showed him to the magistrates. Then they led him away to the public gaol to pay for his offence with his life. As for me, they never tired of laughing and jesting about the way I had looked out. And it is from this occurrence that has arisen the well-known proverb, 'Find the shadow and you'll find the ass.'

BOOK X

WHAT my master the gardener did next day, I know not, but as for me the soldier who had received such a notable drubbing for his tyrannical insolence removed me from the stall where I had been lodged, and led me away without any one saying him nay. Then taking his baggage from the quarters where he had been billeted—for so it seemed to me—he loaded me and led me forth upon our journey adorned and armed like any soldier. For I carried a helmet that shone exceedingly bright, a shield whose splendour flashed farther still, and also a spear conspicuous for the length of its shaft. All these, not in pursuance of his military duties, but merely to terrify wretched wayfarers, he had carefully arrayed on the extreme summit of his vast pile of baggage as though he were marshalling an army for battle. After an easy journey through level lands we came to a certain small township and turned in, not at any hostelry, but at the house of a certain councillor. I was straightway given over to the care of a young slave, while the soldier went off in haste to report himself to his commanding officer, who was in charge of a thousand men-at-arms.

A few days later I remember a most wicked and abandoned crime was contrived in that same place where I was lodged. I will set it down in this book,

that you also may read it. The owner of the house had a young son who had shown great proficiency in his literary studies, and as a result of his reading was remarkable both for piety and modesty. He was in fact just such a son as thou, gentle reader, mightest wish had been thine own. His mother had died years ago and his father had contracted a new marriage and taken to himself a second wife, who had borne him a second son now just entering on his thirteenth year. The step-mother, thanks rather to her beauty than her virtues, ruled supreme in her husband's house and, whether nature had created her unchaste or her destiny impelled her to the abominable crime, cast her eyes upon her step-son. Thou must know, excellent reader, that thou art now reading a tragedy and no mere comedy, and that thou shalt soar from the comic sock to the tragic buskin. This woman then, as long as the Cupid whom she nourished in her bosom was but a newborn babe and his strength but weakness, easily repressed and silently resisted the young fire of passion. But when at length her whole heart became filled with raging flame and Love blazed forth in frenzied revel, she gave way before the fury of the god, and feigning faintness disguised her soul's hurt under the semblance of bodily sickness. Now, as all men know, love and sickness tally exactly in the ruin that they work to the body's health and the face's beauty. In both there is the same unsightly pallor, the same drooping eyes and weary knees, the same disturbed slumber and sighs that the slow torment makes all the fiercer. Thou wouldest

have deemed her anguished by the heats of fever, save that she also wept. Alas for the ignorance of our physicians ! What means this pulsing of the veins, this heightened colour, this weary labouring breath, this frequent alternate tossing to and fro to this side and to that ? Great gods, how easy for one who is skilled in love's passion, though he be no practised physician, to understand where the mischief lies when he sees one all on fire with fever though the body burns not at all !

Wherefore at last, as this intolerable frenzy ate 3 deeper and deeper still, she broke her long silence and bade her son be called to her. Her son ! how gladly she would have abolished that name had she been able, that so she might not be stung by the blush of shame.

The youth delayed not to answer his sick parent's call, but with the obedience naturally due to his father's wife and his brother's mother, sought her bedchamber, his young brow all wrinkled with austerity such as age might wear. But she, worn out by the long anguish of her silence, and shipwrecked as it were upon the shoals of doubt, hesitated how best she might begin, rejecting afresh each word that had seemed to her most apt to their present converse. Shame had not left her yet, but trembled in the balance. The youth, however, not even then suspected any ill, but on the contrary, with respectful mien, asked her what had caused her present sickness. Then she, seeing that they were alone together, seized the fatal opportunity, flung caution to the winds, and weeping floods of tears and veiling her face with her

cloak thus briefly addressed him and her voice trembled as she spoke.

‘Thou thyself art the sole cause and fount of my present anguish, thou also art its true antidote, and thou my sole salvation. For those eyes of thine have entered mine and pierced right to my heart’s core, and the fire they waken burns fierce in my veins. Pity me, therefore, who perish for thy sake, and let not respect for thy father altogether fright thee back, for thou shalt be the saviour of his wife who else must die. I recognize his likeness in thy face. That justifies my love for thee! Now thou hast such security as solitude can give, thou hast time for the sin that thou needs must do. That which none other knows to have been done is scarce a deed at all.’ The youth was dismayed at the sudden ill that had befallen him, but although he shrank with the utmost horror from such a crime, thought that he should not aggravate the evil by an untimely and stern refusal, but that he should rather assuage it by postponement and a cautious promise of consent. Wherefore with many words he promised compliance, and earnestly bade her be of good cheer and devote herself to the restoration of her health until such time as his father might chance to go abroad and a safe opportunity be given for the gratification of her desire. He then straightway departed from the guilty presence of his step-mother. But since he thought that in the face of the overwhelming calamity that threatened his home he needed fuller council, he betook himself forthwith to a certain old man who had

brought him up, and on whose virtue he could rely. After long deliberation it was decided that the safest course was to seek refuge in hasty flight from the tempest that the cruelty of fortune had gathered about him. But the woman was impatient at even the slightest delay, and with wondrous cunning persuaded her husband to set forth at once on some feigned errand to certain villas they possessed in a far country. When he was gone, maddened by the thought that her hope was ripe for fulfilment, in headlong haste she demanded the accomplishment of their promised union. But the youth, pleading now one excuse, now another, evaded her hateful presence until she clearly perceived from the variety of excuses brought her by his messengers that he refused to perform his promise, and in her fickle and unstable spirit her impious passion was changed to a yet more appalling hatred. Straightway she summoned to aid her a slave who had come with her as part of her dowry, a man of the most abandoned character and, slave though he was, a free citizen of the world of crime. To him she told her treacherous designs, nor could she think of any better course than to make away with the luckless youth. Wherefore this villain was dispatched to procure some swift poison, which he dissolved carefully in wine and made ready for the destruction of the guiltless step-son.

But while these baleful creatures deliberated with 5 themselves when best they might administer the poison, it chanced that the younger boy, that wicked woman's own son, came home from his morning's work at school,

and feeling thirsty after his midday meal came upon the cup wherein the venom lay concealed, and little recking of the guile that lurked therein, drained it at one draught. And when he had drained to the last drop the death prepared for his brother, he fell lifeless to the earth. Thereupon his tutor, dismayed at the boy's sudden destruction, uttered a lamentable cry and summoned the mother and all the household. When it was perceived that he had perished by reason of the poisoned drink, each one that was present accused diverse persons of the horrible crime. But that fearful woman, whose unrivalled malice made her a paragon even among step-mothers, was no whit dismayed by her son's lamentable end, nor by the consciousness of her own unnatural crime nor the misfortune of the house, nor the thought of her husband's grief nor the sorrow of death, but employed the calamity that had fallen on the household to hasten her vengeance, and sent a swift messenger to her husband to tell him of the murder wrought against his house. He hastily returned from his journey, whereupon she, with an amazing assumption of boldness, asserted that her son had been carried off by poison belonging to her step-son. And so far she spoke but truth, inasmuch as the boy had intercepted poison that was destined for the young man. But she alleged that her step-son had murdered his younger brother to punish her for repulsing his own abominable overtures. Nor was she content with these monstrous lies, but added that the same sword now threatened her life because she had detected his guilt. Thereat her

unhappy husband, tormented by the thought that he had lost both his sons, was tossed upon a great sea of troubles. For he saw his younger son laid out for burial before his eyes, and knew that the elder must assuredly be doomed to death for incest and fratricide. Moreover, his love for his wife, and her all too well-simulated lamentations, drove him to the most embittered hatred of his offspring.

Scarce were the funeral rites and the burial of his son accomplished, when straightway the unhappy father, now well-advanced in years, rushed with all speed from the graveside into the marketplace. Fresh-welling tears bedewed his cheeks, and he tore his white hair that was all befouled with ashes. Then with weeping and with prayers, even embracing the knees of the senators, he worked with all his heart and soul for the destruction of his remaining son, knowing naught of the craft practised by that most wicked woman. It was his son, he cried, had outraged his father's couch, his son that had most foully murdered his brother, and had threatened also to be his step-mother's assassin ! With such pity and indignation did he inflame the senate, aye, and the common folk also, that they all together cried that there was no need for any trial to drag out its weary length, nor for the accuser to prove his case with evidence that was as clear as day, nor for the accused to defend himself with crafty circumlocutions : the sinner should be slain by stoning and the public wrong publicly avenged.

Meanwhile the magistrates, in terror for their own

safety, and fearing that the popular indignation, now but in its infancy, might grow to an open riot with destruction of public order and property, some of them entreated the senators to desist from their purpose, while others attempted to control the mob; they besought them not to condemn a man unheard, as though they were wild barbarians or savage tyrants, nor give such a terrible example to the world in a time of peace and tranquillity: let the trial take place in due form after the custom of their ancestors, let examination be made of the allegations on both sides, and sentence be passed in a manner befitting a civilized state.

7 This salutary advice prevailed, and the town crier was forthwith bidden to summon the fathers of the city to the senate house. After they had taken their accustomed seats, each according to his rank, at another summons from the town crier the principal accuser made his entry. Last, the name of the accused was called, and he too entered, while, after the custom of Attic law and the court of the Areopagus, the town crier bade the advocates on either side to abstain from long prefaces and appeals to pity. That all this had taken place I learned from the conversation of sundry persons among themselves. But as to the words in which the accuser denounced the accused, or the arguments with which the accused sought to clear himself—of all this, together with the set speeches and the thrust and parry of argument between the advocates, I had no means of informing myself; for I was confined to my stable. I cannot

therefore recount to you events of which I was wholly ignorant, but those things whereof I have certain knowledge shall be duly set down in this my book. As soon as the advocates had brought their arguments to a conclusion, it was resolved that the truth and credibility of the charges should be established by sure proof, and that there should be no guesswork based on mere suspicion in a matter of such importance. Above all, it was decided that that slave who was asserted to be the only person who knew that the facts were as alleged, must at all costs be produced in court. Neither the circumstances of so important a trial, nor the sight of the crowded senate house, nor his own guilty conscience had the slightest terrors for this gallows-bird, who began to asseverate and affirm the lying inventions of his own brain as though they were the very truth. He said that the young man, stung to fury by his step-mother's rejection of his advances, had summoned his aid ; that to revenge his injury he had charged him to make away with her son ; that he had promised a rich reward for his silence, and had threatened him with death if he refused ; that, after mixing the poison with his own hands, he had given it him to administer to his brother ; and finally, suspecting that he had refused to serve the cup and set it aside with the intention of producing it as evidence of his guilt, had proffered it to the boy with his own hand. The scoundrel produced these ingenious and only too plausible inventions without the slightest trepidation,¹ and the trial drew to its close.

¹ *sine ulla tum trepidatione* (Van der Vliet).

8 Not one of the senators had remained so favourably disposed to the young man as to hesitate for a moment to bring in a verdict of guilty, and to sentence him to be sewn up in the fratricide's sack. And now the time had come for the votes—which all agreed one with the other, inasmuch as the pens of all the judges had written naught save one word, ‘guilty’—to be thrown into the brazen urn, as was ordained by immemorial custom; and, mind you, when this was done and the voting-pebbles were all enclosed in the urn, the verdict could not be revoked, the accused’s fate would be decided once and for all, and power over his life would have been given into the hands of the executioner. But just at that very moment one of the oldest of the senators, a physician and a man of the utmost influence and the very highest credit, placed his hand over the mouth of the urn, that no man might insert his voting-pebble without full knowledge, and thus addressed the assembly:—

‘ I am an old man, and I rejoice that all my life has been crowned by your approval, and I will not suffer the prisoner, who is the victim of false charges, to be murdered—for it will be no less than murder—nor will I allow you, who give your verdict under solemn oath, to be misled into perjuring yourselves by the lies of a worthless slave. I, for my part, cannot so trample under foot the reverence that I owe the gods, nor so cheat my own conscience as to give a false verdict. Learn therefore from me how the truth stands.

9 That miscreant there came to me not long ago and

was eager to procure a swift poison, for which he offered a hundred pieces of gold. This poison, he said, was required by a certain sick man, who being vehemently tormented by a slow disease past all cure, desired to free himself from the agony of his existence. I perceived that the abominable rogue was talking nonsense and inventing reasons that were far from plausible, and being convinced that he was plotting some crime, gave him a potion—yes, I gave it; but to guard myself in case of some future inquiry I did not at once accept the price he offered, but said to him, “In case some of the pieces of gold that you offer me should prove false or debased, keep them in their bag and affix your seal; in a day or so I will have them tested by some money-changer.” He was persuaded by my words and sealed up the money, which as soon as he was produced in court I bade one of my servants fetch from my shop with all speed. He has brought it, and here it is, as you can see. Let him look and recognize his seal. Now how can the elder brother be charged with having procured the poison when it was purchased by that rascal himself?”

At this the rogue was seized with the utmost consternation, a pallor as of death drove all hue of life from his cheeks and a cold sweat broke from every limb. Then he began to shuffle uncertainly with his feet, to scratch now this part of his head, now that, and with half-shut mouth stuttered and mumbled out some nonsense or other, so that henceforth no one could possibly believe him innocent of the crime. Once more, however, his cunning revived; he denied his guilt most

strongly and incessantly accused the physician of lying. The latter, when he saw that not only his oath as a judge but also his personal honour was being publicly impugned, increased his efforts to confute the rogue, until at a command from the magistrates the constables seized the hands of that wicked slave, stripped off his iron ring and compared it with the seal upon the bag. This comparison confirmed previous suspicions. The wheel and the rack, which in accordance with Greek custom had been made ready for his torture, were now applied, but such was his astounding obstinacy and presumption that neither scourging nor even burning made any impression.

¶ Then said the physician, 'By Hercules, I will not suffer you to affront justice by punishing this innocent youth, nor shall this fellow make a mockery of our court and escape the penalty of his impious crime. I will give absolute proof of the facts in question. When that abandoned rogue wanted to purchase a deadly poison, I thought it unbecoming my profession to give him what might cause death—for I had been taught that medicine was meant to save, not to destroy. But fearing that if I refused to give it him, an untimely refusal might merely further his crime and that the scoundrel might purchase a deadly poison elsewhere, or failing that, would carry out the crime on which he was embarked with a sword or some other weapon, I gave him a drug, causing not death but sleep, to wit, mandragora, which is famous for the well-known stupor that it induces, and brings on a slumber most like

to death. You need not marvel that that most desperate ruffian endures torture so readily. He knows the penalty to which the custom of our ancestors condemns him, and thinks those tortures light in comparison. But if in very truth the boy drank the potion mixed by my hands, he is not dead but lies in deep slumber, and will soon shake off the faintness of sleep and return to the daylight once again. If, however, he has been murdered or cut off by death, you may seek the cause of his decease elsewhere.'

Thus did the old man plead, and his words found 12 acceptance. Without delay all hurried eagerly to the tomb, where the boy's body had been placed and now lay. There was not one of all the senate, or the nobles, or even the common people, who did not throng thither to satisfy their curiosity. And, lo and behold ! when the father had with his own hands removed the lid of the coffin, he found that the boy had just shaken off his deathlike slumber and was rising, returned from the dead. He caught him in a close embrace and, words failing him to express his joy, led him forth to the people. And just as he was, still shrouded and cumbered with his graveclothes, the boy was carried to the judgement seat. The crime of the abandoned slave and yet more abandoned woman was now clear as day, the naked truth was out ; the step-mother was condemned to banishment for life, the slave was crucified, and by universal consent the pieces of gold were awarded to the good physician as a reward for the sleep which he had caused with such happy results. Nay more,

the old man by the blessing of divine providence met with a worthy recompense through this remarkable and miraculous stroke of fortune. For whereas he had been in danger of dying childless, in a short time, nay in the twinkling of an eye, he had suddenly become the father of two young men!

13 Meanwhile I continued to be tossed on the waves of fortune, as I will proceed to tell. The soldier who had secured me without buying me from any one, and had made me his own without paying a penny, in due obedience to the orders of his commandant was about to carry dispatches for the great emperor at Rome, and sold me for eleven denarii to two brothers who were slaves dwelling hard by. They were the servants of a man of great wealth. One of them was a confectioner who made bread and sweetmeats, the other was a cook who stewed soft savoury dainties with the most delicious of sauces. They dwelt together in one room and lived from a common store, and they had purchased me to carry the various vessels which were necessary for the diverse purposes of their master whose travels led him through many different regions of Thessaly. I was admitted to their company and made the third lodger in the room which the two brothers occupied. Never before had Fortune been so kind to me. For in the evening, after some rich dinner, some sumptuous and magnificent banquet, my masters would bring back to their room many fragments of the feast. The one would bring a most plentiful supply of broken meats—pork, chicken, fish, and all manner of

viands ; the other would bring loaves, pastry, tarts, rolls, twists, and every sort of sweetmeat. But when they locked up their room and went to the baths to refresh themselves, I battened on the good things that providence offered me to my heart's desire. I was not such a fool or such a genuine ass as to abandon this most delicious food to eat nasty coarse hay.

For a long time my method of theft prospered exceedingly. So far I had stolen timidly and somewhat sparingly, filching but comparatively little from their abundant store, and they had never suspected an ass of practising such guile. But when, as I became more confident of escaping detection, I took to devouring all the best portions and selected all the sweetest morsels for my gormandizing, considerable suspicions began to disturb the minds of the two brothers, and although even then they did not dream that I was guilty of any such misdeeds, they were at great pains to track down the criminal who caused them so much daily loss.

At last, indeed, they began to accuse each other of this shameful theft and to show greater care and keenness in guarding and counting their provisions. Finally, one of them, throwing aside all reserve, thus addressed the other :—‘It is hardly fair, indeed it is quite inhuman of you, to steal the best portions every day and increase your pocket-money by selling them secretly, and then after that to demand that we should go shares with the rest. If you dislike this partnership, we can give up this bond of union, while remaining

brothers in everything else. For I foresee that what I complain of will cause us immense loss and will breed bitter dissension between us.'

The other retorted, 'By Hercules, I admire your coolness! Day after day you have stolen secretly from our store, and now you take my grievance out of my mouth. I had borne up against it as long as I could, and only groaned over it in silence to myself, for fear of seeming to accuse my brother of a mean theft. But it is a good thing that we should both have spoken out on the subject and be looking for some remedy against our loss. Otherwise our quarrel might have grown in silence and bred strife worthy of Eteocles.'

15 With such bickerings and the like they wrangled together, each swearing that he had never cheated or robbed the other. But they agreed that they clearly ought to use every means to discover the robber who had caused them such loss; the ass, who was the only creature present, could have no interest in such food, yet every day the best portions disappeared; and it was impossible that their chamber should have been entered by flies huge as the Harpies who of old snatched away the food of Phineus.

Meanwhile, as a result of my enjoying such generous repasts and feeding to my heart's content on human fare, my body was swollen with abundance of fat, my hide had become soft with luxuriant grease, and my hair had grown long and splendidly sleek. But it was fated that this same comeliness of body should bring me to great shame. For my masters were perturbed at the

unusual size to which my back was grown, and observing that my hay was daily left almost untouched began to concentrate all their attention upon me. At their usual hour they locked the door after their custom, as though they were going to the baths, and then through a small chink they espied me deep in the banquet that was spread before me. They forgot their losses and, in amazement at such monstrous tastes on the part of an ass, were convulsed with tremendous laughter, and calling first one or two and then more of their fellow-slaves they exhibited to them the unspeakable gluttony of a dull ass! At length they were all overcome with such loud and unrestrained laughter that the noise reached their master's ears as he was passing by. He ¹⁶ inquired what the jest might be that made his household laugh so much, and, on learning the truth, himself looked through the same hole to his intense amusement; he became seized with such convulsive laughter that his inside ached, and finally opening the door of the room he stood near me and surveyed me at close quarters. For inasmuch as I had at last seen a somewhat kindlier smile on Fortune's face, and since the joy of the bystanders inspired me with confidence, I was not in the slightest degree disturbed, but went on eating undismayed until the master of the house, delighted by the strangeness of the spectacle, ordered that I should be led out. Indeed, he actually led me with his own hands to the dining-room, and bade a table be spread with fresh dishes composed of every kind of solid food. And I, although I was already fairly gorged, in my

desire to gratify him and to make myself the more acceptable to him, greedily attacked the dainties spread before me. For they had carefully considered what would be most repulsive to an ass and had placed it before me to test my docility; to wit, meat flavoured with assafoetida, capons sprinkled with pepper, and fish soused in outlandish sauce. Meantime the dining-room re-echoed with wild laughter. At last some wag who was present said, 'Give our good comrade something in the way of wine.'

The master, hearing this sally, said, 'That's not a bad jest of yours, you rascal; for it's not unlikely that our companion would be glad to attack a cup of mead.' He added, 'You there, boy, give that gold tankard a good rinse, fill it with mead and offer it to my guest; tell him also that I have drunk his very good health.'

Great was the excitement caused among those at table. I showed not a trace of dismay, but at my leisure and with the utmost geniality protruded my lower lip as though it had been my tongue and drained 17 the cup at one tremendous draught. At this there arose a roar of applause as all present saluted me with one accord. Then the master, who was quite ecstatic with joy, called his slaves who had purchased me, bade them be given fourfold the price they had paid for me, and committed me to the charge of a favourite freedman, a man of considerable wealth, exhorting him to take the utmost care of me. This man kept me with great kindness and courtesy, and to ingratiate himself with his patron was at great pains to provide

him with fresh amusements by means of my clever tricks. First of all he taught me to lie at table propped on a cushion, next to wrestle and dance with my forefeet raised in air, and finally, most wonderful of all, to nod in answer to words addressed me in such a manner as to indicate what I wanted by bowing my head, and what I did not want by raising it; while when I was thirsty I looked round for the cupbearer and demanded to drink by winking my two eyes alternately. In all this I obeyed him most readily, indeed I could have done so without any instructions. But I was afraid that if perchance I were to perform any human action without being first taught how to do it, they would regard most of my actions as portending and foretelling some sinister event, and would slay me as a monster and a portent and give my fat carcase to be food for vultures. The fame of my doings had now spread abroad, and my wonderful performances had made my master a man of mark and great repute. 'There he goes', men would say; 'that's the man who has an ass to dine with him as his boon companion: an ass that wrestles, an ass that dances, an ass that understands human speech and expresses his wants by nods!'

But first I must at any rate tell you now, what 18 I ought to have told you at the beginning, namely who my master was and whence he came. Thiasus—for that was the name he bore—was born at Corinth, the capital of the whole Province of Achaea. He passed through the various grades of office, as his rank and birth demanded, and had now been appointed *duumvir*

quinquennalis, and in order that he might prove himself equal to so magnificent an occasion as his assumption of the supreme magistracy, he showed unusual munificence and promised a gladiatorial show to extend over three days. In his zeal to win honour with his fellow-townsman he had travelled even as far as Thessaly to purchase the finest wild beasts and gladiators of renown. He had now made all the arrangements and purchases that he desired and was preparing to return home. He spurned his luxurious carriages, he despised his fine coaches and his chariots, of which some were closed and some were open, but all alike travelled unused in the very rear of our caravan; he thought nothing even of his Thessalian horses or Gallic mules, the renown of whose breed causes them to be held in great esteem and makes them costly to procure; but me he adorned with trappings of gold and dyed caparisons, and purple cloths and silver reins, and painted baldrics and bells that tinkled exceeding shrill, and he himself sat upon me and ever and again spoke most lovingly to me in courteous speech; but the chief cause wherefore he delighted in me was, he said, that in me he had one who could not only feast with him but could carry him as well.

19 We travelled part of the way by land and part by sea, and when at last we reached Corinth a great crowd of citizens gathered together desirous, as it seemed to me, not so much to do honour to Thiasus as to set eyes on me. For such a report of me had spread even to Corinth that I proved a source of no small profit to

my keeper. For when he saw from this excess of enthusiasm that many persons were desirous of seeing my tricks, he shut his doors and let them in separately one by one, and by taking entrance money from them he collected considerable sums every day.

[He bethought him also of providing a novelty for 23 the games which his master was about to give, and proposed to him that I should feast in public with a lady by my side.] The master richly rewarded the freed-man and decided that I should take part in the public show. And so a worthless woman, who had been condemned by the governor to be given to the beasts, was procured to appear with me before the crowded benches of the public amphitheatre. I learned that the story of her condemnation was as follows:—

She had a husband, whose father on setting forth to journey abroad instructed his wife, the young man's mother—for her time was near—that if she brought forth a child of the weaker sex, the babe was to be killed at once. While her husband was still away she brought forth a daughter and, mastered by the deep love for their offspring that nature has implanted in mothers, disobeyed her husband and gave the girl to some neighbours to bring up. When her husband returned she told him that a girl had been born and put to death. But at last when the girl was in the flower of her age and ripe for wedlock, since it was impossible, without the knowledge of her husband, to provide a dowry for her daughter, such as might suit her birth, the mother did the only thing she could and

revealed to her son the secret she had kept so long. For she was seriously afraid that he might by some unfortunate chance under the influence of some youthful passion fall in love with his sister (and she with him), neither knowing who the other was. But he was a youth of exemplary piety and religiously obeyed his mother and did his duty by his sister. Locking the secrets of his home beneath the seal of sacred silence, and masking his conduct under the disguise of ordinary feelings of humanity, he proceeded in the following manner to carry out the task imposed on him by the ties of kinship. The neighbour's girl had been left desolate and orphaned of her parent's protection; he proposed therefore to give her the shelter of his house and shortly to bestow her in marriage on his nearest and dearest comrade, providing a most generous dowry
24 out of his own fortune. But these arrangements, good and excellent as they were and prompted by the purest motives, might not escape the fatal ordinance of Fortune, at whose bidding cruel jealousy descended upon the young man's house. And straightway his wife, the same that was now condemned to be given to the beasts for her crime, began at first to suspect the girl as the rival of her bed and the supplanter of her husband's love, then to loathe her, and finally to plot against her with cruel snares of death. The crime that she contrived was as follows.

She stole her husband's signet and going into the country sent a wicked slave, faithful to her but deserving most ill of the goddess of fidelity, to tell the girl that

the young man had gone to his country villa and summoned her thither, adding that she was to go as soon as possible, alone and unaccompanied. And to prevent any chance of delay in her coming, she sent her the signet ring that she had stolen from her husband ; for this when shown to her would convince her that the message was genuine. The girl, in obedience to her brother's bidding—for she alone knew that he was her brother—and out of respect also for his signet, which was shown to her, made no delay, but set forth unaccompanied as had been commanded. But when she had fallen into the trap set for her with such infamous cunning and entered the ambush and the snare, then did that most admirable wife, maddened by the stings of frenzied lust, first strip her husband's sister naked and scourge her most savagely with whips ; and then, though the girl cried aloud the truth and protested that there was no cause for the jealous fury that so maddened her, and though she reiterated again and again that he was her brother, the woman answered that she lied and that all she said was mere invention, and slew her most cruelly.

The brother of the dead girl and he that was to have 25 been her husband on hearing the bitter news of her death hastened to the place and committed her to the tomb after bewailing her with manifold lamentations. But the young man could not calmly endure his sister's death, so unhappy and so undeserved, but his heart was racked with anguish to its inmost core, and he fell into a terrible melancholy and burned with most violent fever, so that even he

himself felt that he required some remedy. But his wife, who had long since abandoned all right to such a name on the day when she cast off her wifely loyalty, sought out a certain physician notorious for his perfidious villanies, who had been crowned with many a palm of victory in the battles in which he had engaged and counted many a trophy of his good right hand ! To him she straightway promised fifty thousand sesterces, in order that he might sell her a sudden poison and that she might purchase her husband's death. This done, she pretended that that most famous potion known to the more learned as the 'Sacred potion' was necessary to soothe the anguish of his heart and to remove his melancholy, but in its place she substituted another potion sacred only to the healing that Proserpine confers. And now, in the presence of the household and some friends and relations, the physician held out to the sick man the cup that his own hands had
26 carefully prepared. But that audacious woman, that she might at once remove the accomplice of her crime and save the money she had promised, stood in front of the proffered goblet and said, 'Most excellent physician, you shall not give that potion to my beloved husband, till you have drained a good part of it yourself. For how do I know that some deadly poison is not concealed in it ? You are such a wise and learned man that you will not be in the least offended if, as a loyal wife who is anxious about her husband's health, I use the necessary precautions that my affection dictates.'

Sudden dismay fell upon the physician when he

perceived the astounding and desperate stroke of that murderous woman ; he lost his wits and, the time being so short that he had no opportunity of thinking what he should do, he took an ample draught of the potion sooner than give the slightest suspicion of a guilty conscience by any hesitation or sign of fear. The young man, accepting this guarantee, himself took the cup and drank what was offered. The business having been thus accomplished, the physician would have returned home as fast as he might ; for he was in haste to check the deadly force of the poison he had just drunk by means of some saving antidote. But the murderous woman, with obstinate persistence in the foul crime on which she was embarked, would not suffer him to depart a hair's-breadth from her side 'until,' she said, 'the potion is digested and we can see the effect of your medicine.' But at last after he had besought and entreated her loud and long she yielded, wearied by his prayers, and suffered him to depart. Meanwhile the baneful poison raged through all his vitals and had reached his very heart, and crippled and bowed down with heavy stupor he scarce had strength to reach his home. And there, after he had told his wife all and bidden her at least to demand the payment that had been promised for compassing this double murder, that most admirable physician fell in violent convulsions and breathed his last.

Nor did the young man survive him, but died a like 27 death amid the false feigned lamentations of his spouse. The physician's wife allowed a few days to elapse after

his burial, namely those which are occupied in making funeral offerings to the dead, and then came to demand the reward for this double murder. But the woman was still true to her colours ; with feigned loyalty to the compact—for she had utterly banished all true loyalty from her—she replied in soothing speech and with many words and elaborate courtesy promised to pay, and assured her that she should have the stipulated reward without delay if she would only give her a little of the same potion that she might complete the work she had begun. What more need I say ? The physician's wife was caught in the snare set by her atrocious cunning, readily assented and, to ingratiate herself the more with this wealthy woman, hurried home, found the poison, and actually gave her the whole casket-full. And she, having thus acquired such ample store for the prosecution of her crimes, stretched out her murderous hands far and wide about her.

28 She had a little daughter by the husband whom she had just slain. She could not endure the thought that this babe must needs by law be heir to its father's fortune, and greedily put forth her hands to take all her daughter's inheritance and to take her life as well. Wherefore, knowing that such crime-stained inheritances went to the mother upon the death of her children, she showed herself no less terrible as mother than she had revealed herself as wife, and arranging a luncheon-party at a convenient time, struck down the physician's wife and her daughter with the same poison at one fell swoop. Now the deadly venom wrought instant

destruction to the tender lungs and weak and delicate vitals of the babe. But the physician's wife, while the fury of that abominable potion ranged through her lungs, destroying where it wound its way, at first only suspected the truth, but soon the difficulty with which she drew her breath made her more certain than certainty itself; she hurried to the governor's house, appealed to his protection with loud cries, and created a tumult among the people by asserting that she had the most horrible crimes to reveal, until she succeeded in bringing the governor to open his doors and his ears to her without more ado. And when she had carefully set forth from the beginning all the abominable acts of that most cruel woman, a sudden cloud and giddiness came over her brain, she closed her lips even as they were parted to speak, and grinding her teeth with a long grating screech she fell dead at the very feet of the governor. Nor did he—for he had experience in such matters—suffer the manifold crimes of this venomous serpent to grow cold through any slackness or delay, but put her chamber-women to the torture, extracted the truth from them, and condemned her to be thrown to the beasts. It was less punishment than she deserved, but no worthier torment could be devised for her.

Such was the woman with whom I was to revel in 29 public, and it was with great suspense and anguish of spirit that I awaited the day of the show. Often I was ready to slay myself sooner than defile myself by association with that crime-stained woman, and be put

to shame by partaking in such a spectacle before all the world. But deprived as I was of human hands and fingers, my round deformed hoofs were incapable of drawing a sword. But one slender little hope consoled me in this the worst of my calamities. Spring was just beginning and was painting all the world with its flower-buds and clothing the meadows with purple sheen, and the roses that were to make me my own Lucius again had just broken their thorny sheaths and were shining forth with breath sweet as the scent of cinnamon.

And lo ! the day appointed for the show was come. As the people thronged into the theatre's enclosure, I was led forth in solemn procession amid the plaudits of the crowd. And while the opening stages of the spectacle were given up to the sportive dances of actors, I in the meantime, at the door of the theatre where I had been placed, gladly browsed the rich herbage that grew in the very entrance, and then from time to time refreshed my curious eyes with the delightful prospect which the open doorway permitted me to view.

For young boys and girls in the fresh flower of their age, fair to view, in shining raiment, with eloquent rhythmic steps began to dance the Pyrrhic dance of Greece. In order due they moved through graceful figures, now sweeping round in full circle, now linked in slanting line, now massed in squares or breaking away from the throng into separate groups. But when the concluding blast of the trumpet brought the interwoven mazes of their threading movements to

a close, the great curtain fell away, the lesser curtains were drawn back, and the stage was arrayed before our eyes.

There was a mountain of wood, fashioned after the 30 likeness of that famous mount Ida whereof the poet Homer sang. It was built up into a towering structure, planted with shrubs and living trees, while from its topmost peak it sent forth a running stream that had its source in a fountain wrought by the hands of the artificer. A few goats cropped the young herbage and a youth after the likeness of a Phrygian herdsman, with barbaric mantle streaming from his shoulders, a fair tunic about his body, and a turban of gold on his head, counterfeited the action of those that watch over their flocks. By him was a beauteous boy, naked save for the stripling's cloak that covered his left shoulder, with yellow hair, a mark for all men's eyes, and midst his locks protruded tiny wings of gold, a perfect pair springing from either side his head. The herald's wand showed him to be Mercury. He ran forward with dancing step and in his right hand held out to the other, who seemed to be Paris, an apple covered with leaf of gold, and signifying by his nod what Jupiter had bidden him deliver, he nimbly withdrew his steps and passed from our sight. Then followed a maiden very noble of countenance in the likeness of the goddess Juno. A shining diadem was about her head, she carried also a sceptre. Another burst upon our gaze, whom you would deem to be Minerva, for her head was covered with a shining helmet, and the helmet itself

was wreathed with a crown of olive; she raised her buckler and brandished her spear and was as Minerva
31 when she goes forth to battle. After these entered a third, surpassing fair and a joy to behold, in the grace of her ambrosial hue showing forth the likeness of Venus as she was when she was a maid. Her body was naked and uncovered and displayed all her perfect beauty, save that it was veiled by a robe of thinnest silk which the wanton wind would blow against her, so that it clung close to her and outlined with all a painter's skill the charms of her fair limbs. The colours wherein the goddess was arrayed were diverse: her body was shining white, in token that she is the child of heaven; her raiment azure, in token that she rose from the sea. And each of these maidens, who were deemed to be goddesses, were followed by their several escorts. Juno was followed by Castor and Pollux, whose heads were covered with oval helmets with stars set bright upon their crests. And Castor and Pollux also were no more than youthful actors. This maiden came forward to the rippling music of the Ionian flute, and with quiet and unaffected gesture and stately movement of the head promised the herdsman that if he awarded her the prize of loveliness she would make him king over all Asia. But she whom her array of armour showed to be Minerva was escorted by two boys, the armourbearers that go with the goddess of battle, Terror and Fear, dancing fiercely with naked swords. And behind her a fluteplayer sounded the warlike Dorian mode, mingling deep booming notes with shrill blasts that rang

like a trumpet call, and he danced with nimble strength. With restless head and eyes in whose glance were threats, with swift and nervous gesticulation and fiery mien, she showed to Paris that if he accorded her the victory in beauty's battle, he should by her aid be made brave and glorious with the trophies of war.

But lo ! Venus, surrounded by a whole host of merry 32 little children, with a sweet smile and charming grace took her stand in the very midst of the stage amid the loud plaudits of all the theatre. You would have said that those little boys, so slim and milky white, were true Cupids who had just flown down from heaven or forth from the sea. For they were the very image of Cupids, with their little wings and tiny arrows and their comeliness also, and they lit the path of their mistress with torches as though they were going to honour some nuptial feast. Also there glided on to the stage a lovely troop of unwedded girls, on one side the Graces most full of grace, on the other the Hours exceeding lovely. These, casting flowers twined in wreaths or free, saluted their goddess and wove a most delicate dance, gladdening the mistress of pleasures with all the petals of spring. And now flutes with many stops breathed forth in sweet accord the airs of Lydia. But though their strains charmed the hearts of the spectators with their sweetness, Venus was sweeter far ; and she began to move gently and to advance with slow and lingering step and body gently balanced to and fro and softly bowing head, and with delicate gestures she kept time to the soft sound of the

flutes and made signs with eyes now mildly closed, now flashing threats, and sometimes all her dancing was in her glances. And as soon as she came into the presence of the judge, she seemed by the passionate movement of her arms to promise that if she was preferred to the others she would give to Paris for his bride one like herself of surpassing loveliness. Whereat the Phrygian youth with right goodwill gave her the apple that he held, as it were a vote of victory cast with a pebble of gold.

33 Why then marvel¹ if nowadays our judges, vile creatures, nay beasts of the lawcourt, or rather vultures robed in the toga, sell, one and all, their votes for a price, seeing that in the beginning of things beauty's influence corrupted the trial, wherein both gods and men had part, and the rustic shepherd chosen judge by the counsels of mighty Jupiter sold the first vote for the gratification of his lust, to the utter destruction of his own race? Such also was the case with other trials that took place afterwards between renowned leaders of the Achivi, whether when Palamedes, who was pre-eminent for learning and wisdom, was falsely accused and condemned as a traitor, or when Ulysses, no great fighter, was preferred to the most mighty Ajax, supreme among them all for his courage in battle. And what a trial was that which took place among the shrewd-witted Athenians, the instructors in all knowledge! Was not an old man of godlike sagacity, whom

¹ I read *si vilissima*, &c. These abusive names can only refer to *toti nunc iudices*.

the Delphic god set above all men for his wisdom, ensnared by the guile and hatred of a most worthless band of men, accused as the corrupter of the young, whom he guided as with reins, and slain by the deadly juice of a noxious herb, leaving a stain of undying ignominy upon his fellow-citizens, while even now excellent philosophers elect to follow his most holy rule above all others and in their zeal for the life of true happiness swear allegiance to his name? But lest some one should disapprove of the violence of my indignation and think to himself, 'Look here! are we to suffer an ass to talk philosophy to us?' I will return once more to my story at the point where I digressed.

After Paris had given his judgement, Juno and 34 Minerva departed from the stage, downcast and like as though they were angry, and showing by their gestures their indignation at their rebuff. But Venus was full of joy and merriment, and showed her delight by dancing with all the troop of her attendants. Then from the mountain's topmost peak through some hidden pipe there spouted high in air saffron mingled with wine, which being sprinkled abroad fell in odorous rain about the feeding goats until they were dyed to a fairer hue and changed their natural whiteness for yellow. And now, while the whole theatre was sweet with the scent, a chasm opened in the ground and swallowed up the mountain of wood.

Then behold! a soldier directed his steps across the midst of the arena to fetch from the public gaol—for the people were now clamouring for her—that woman

who, as I told you above, had been condemned for her manifold crimes to be thrown to the beasts, and with whom I was to make merry. And now the dining couch was spread with care: it was made of transparent Indian tortoiseshell, piled high with downy cushions and bright with silk. But I, over and above my shame at associating with a woman foul with such fearful crime, was also mightily tormented with the fear of death. For, thought I to myself, while we are in the midst of our merriment, whatever beast they let loose to devour the woman, it cannot be expected that it will be endowed with such shrewd discrimination or so artificially trained or so abstemious as to tear in pieces the woman at my side and spare me as being innocent 35 and under no sentence of death. Therefore, while my instructor was completely occupied about the erection of the couch and the slaves were all either engaged in preparing to hunt the wild beasts or wrapped up in their astonishment at the merry spectacle in preparation, I was given free space for my deliberations and, as no one thought that so tame an ass needed any special surveillance, I furtively advanced my steps to the nearest door, gained it, and tore out at my best speed. After covering six full miles with great swiftness, I reached Cenchiae, a town which is accounted part of the most famous colony of Corinth and is washed by the Aegean and Saronic seas. Its harbour affords the safest refuge for sailors, and is continually thronged with a great multitude of people. I avoided the crowds, and selecting a lonely part of the shore I

stretched out my weary body and rested quite close to the foam cast up by the breakers, in a bed of softest sand. For now the sun's car had passed day's farthest goal, and I gave myself up to the calm of evening and sweet sleep fell upon me.

BOOK 'XI

1 ABOUT the first watch of the night I awoke in sudden terror and saw the full orb of the moon just rising from the waves ; exceeding bright it was and of unwonted splendour. All about me was the silent mystery of the dark night. I knew that the supreme goddess was now in the plenitude of her power and that the lives of men were governed by her providence ; I knew that not only all cattle and creatures of the wild, but even things inanimate were given new life by her divine splendour and the power of her godhead, and that all bodies on land or sky or sea waxed or waned in accordance with her will. Sure now that fate was at last glutted with the many and great calamities I had endured, and after a long time offered some hope of safety, I resolved to address my prayers to the august vision of the goddess now present in power, and straightway shaking off sluggish slumber nimbly arose and forthwith, longing to wash away my stains, yielded myself to the cleansing sea. Seven times I dipped my head in the waves—for the divine Pythagoras had taught me that that number best became all sacred ritual—and thus made I my supplication to the all-powerful goddess, my face bathed in tears :—

2 ‘Queen of heaven, whether thou beest Ceres, the

kindly mother from whom in the beginning spring the fruits of earth, who, rejoicing to have found thy daughter, didst take from men their bestial provender of old-world acorns and show forth to them a sweeter food, and now thou honourest exceedingly the soil of Eleusis ;—or beest thou Venus the heavenly one, who at the first beginning of things didst unite the diversity of the sexes in the power of Love that is born of thee, and, after thou hadst brought to birth the race of man that shall endure from generation to generation, art now honoured in thine island shrine of Paphos ;—or beest thou Phoebus's sister, who with gentle healing dost bring relief to women in travail and hast reared such multitudes, and now art worshipped in the most glorious fanes of Ephesus ;—or beest thou Proserpine, to whom men render shuddering reverence with howls by night, thou whose threefold visage awes the wild rages of the goblin-dead and holds fast the gates of hell, who wanderest in many a diverse grove and art propitiated with varied rite ; thou that with thy tender feminine light dost illume the walls of all cities and with thy moist fires dost nurture the springing seeds, and dispensest thy beams that shift and change with the changes of the sun ;—by whatever name, by whatever rite, in whatever semblance man may invoke thee, do thou now aid me in my utter woe, do thou restore my shattered fortunes and give pause and peace to the cruel calamities that I have endured. Answer, “Enough of toil ! enough of peril !” Take from me the foul semblance of a fourfooted beast, restore me to the sight of those

I love, restore to me the Lucius that I knew. But if it be that any deity afflicts me with wrath that knows no appeasing, at least let me die, if I may not live life that is life indeed.'

3 Thus had I outpoured my supplication and added thereto much woful wailing, when once more slumber was shed about me on that same couch of sand and overcame my fainting soul. Yet scarce had I closed mine eyes in sleep, when lo! from the mid deep there rose a face divine that lifted towards me a countenance to which even the gods must do reverence. And then slowly, methought, appeared a shining semblance, that rose till all its body was in view and shook the brine from its limbs and stood before me. I will strive to tell you all the wonder of the sight, if but the poverty of human speech give me power to tell, or the godhead itself that dwelt within that form supply rich store of speaking eloquence.

First, the tresses of its hair were thick and long and streamed softly down, now tangled, now straying wide about that neck divine. About its lofty brow was bound a crown of many shapes and varied flowers, and in the midst thereof above the forehead there shone white and glowing a round disc like a mirror or after the semblance of the moon; to right and left it was bound about with the furrowed coils of climbing vipers; above it stretched forth ears of corn. The tunic¹ was of many colours, woven of fine linen, now gleaming with a snowy brightness, now yellow with hue of

¹ *vestis tunica* (Van der Vliet).

saffron, now blushing with roseate flame. But the cloak it was that dazzled my gaze far beyond all else, for it was of deep black glistering with sable sheen ; it was cast round and about the body, and passing under the right side was brought back to the left shoulder. Part of it hung shieldwise down and drooped in many a fold, and the whole streamed seemly to its utmost edge with tasselled fringe. Along its broidered 4 border, and on its surface also, were scattered sparkling stars, and in their midst the full moon breathed forth her flaming fire. But wheresoever streamed the embracing folds of that wondrous cloak, there clung a garland's endless wreath, wrought of all manner of flowers, all manner of fruit.

In its hands the apparition held emblems of different aspect. The right hand carried a bronze rattle made of a slender sheet of metal curved like a belt, through the midst of which were thrust a few small wands, that gave forth a tinkling sound when the arm that bore them shook thrice with quivering pulsation. From the left hand hung a golden cup, from whose slender handle's most conspicuous part there rose an asp towering with head erect and neck that swelled to this side and to that. The ambrosial feet were shod with sandals woven of the leaves of victorious palm. Such was the vision, and of such mighty aspect, that, breathing forth all the blest fragrance of Arabian balms, thus deigned to honour me with utterance divine :—

‘ Lo, Lucius, I am come, moved by thy supplication, 5 I, nature's mother, mistress of all the elements, the

first-begotten offspring of the ages, of deities mightiest, queen of the dead, first of heaven's denizens, in whose aspect are blent the aspects of all gods and goddesses. With my rod I rule the shining heights of heaven, the health-giving breezes of the sea, the mournful silence of the underworld. The whole earth worships my godhead, one and individual, under many a changing shape, with varied rites and by many diverse names. There the Phrygians, first-born of men, call me the mother of the gods that dwells at Pessinus; there the Athenians, sprung from the soil they till, know me as Cecropian Minerva; there the wave-beaten Cyprians style me Venus of Paphos; the archer Cretans, Diana of the hunter's net; the Sicilians, with their threefold speech, Stygian Proserpine; the Eleusinians, the ancient goddess Ceres. Others call me Juno, others Bellona, others Hecate, others the Rhamnusian, but¹ those on whom shine the first rays of the sungod as each day he springs to new birth, the Arii and the Ethiopians, and the Egyptians mighty in ancient lore, honour me with my peculiar rites and call me by my true name, Isis the Queen. I am come in pity for thy woes. I am come propitious and strong to aid. Cease from thy weeping and lay by thy lamentation and put aside thy grief. For now by my providence there dawmeth for thee the day of safety. Wherefore turn thy afflicted spirit to heed what I command. The day, even the day that springeth from this night, is mine by everlasting consecration; thereon—for that I have laid to rest the

¹ *sed* (Bluemner).

storms of winter and stilled the tempestuous waves of the sea—my priests dedicate to the deep, now navigable, a barque that ne'er hath sailed the waves, and offer it in mine honour as the firstfruits of the year's seafaring. Thou must await this festival with heart untroubled and profane thoughts banished far from thee. For 6 the priest who shall assist in the celebration of the procession, forewarned by me, will bear clinging to the sistrum in his right hand a wreath of roses. Then delay not, but brush aside the crowds and lightly join my procession, relying on my goodwill. Draw nigh and gently, as though thou wouldest kiss the priest's hand, pluck the roses and put off from thee straightway the hide of that vile beast, that hath ever been hateful to me. And shrink not from any of these things as too hard for thee. For at this very moment wherein I appear to thee I am present there with my priest also and instruct him in his sleep as to what shall follow, and what he must do. At my bidding the people that throng thee about will part and leave clear a path for thee. Nor amid those merry sights and those gay ceremonies will any one shudder at that foul aspect thou wearest, nor will any interpret to thy shame thy sudden change of shape nor make malign accusation against thee. But thou must remember surely and keep hidden in thine inmost soul this—that the rest of thy life's course, to the term of thy last breath, is dedicate to me. Nor is it unjust that thou shouldst, so long as thou shalt live, owe all thy life to her who brought thee back to mankind. But thou shalt live

blessèd, thou shalt live crowned with glory beneath my protection, and when thy life is run and thou goest down to the nether world, there also in that nether hemisphere thou shalt see me shining through the darkness of Acheron and reigning in the inmost halls of Styx ; and thou shalt dwell in the Elysian fields, and continually make offering of worship to me, and I will smile on thee. Nay, if by sedulous observance and religious service and persistent chastity thou bear thee worthy of my godhead, thou shalt know that I alone have power to prolong thy life beyond the space ordained by fate.'

7 So closed the awful prophecy, and the unvanquished deity vanished into the universe that is itself. Then straightway sleep left me, and with mingled fear and joy, and bathed in sweat, I rose and, marvelling exceedingly at that most glorious manifestation of the goddess's power, sprinkled myself with sea-spray and, with mind bent to her mighty behests, recalled in order all she had bid me do. And forthwith when the cloud of black night had passed and the golden sun arose, lo ! with devout and even triumphal throng crowds filled all the streets of the city and all things, not I alone, seemed to rejoice with such merriment that I felt that every manner of beast, every house, and the very day itself rejoiced with unclouded face. For a calm and sunny day had suddenly followed on the frost of yesternight, and even the little songbirds, lured forth by the warmth of spring, sang all together sweet and clear, cheering with gentle welcome her that is the mother of all stars, parent of seasons, and

mistress of the whole world. Nay the trees also, rich in promise of fruit or barren and content with their shade alone, thawed by the breath of the warm southwest and bright with budding leaves, made a sweet rustling murmur with the soft motion of their boughs. The mighty roaring of tempests was dumb, the wild waves swelled no more, and the sea restrained the breakers on its shores to a quiet ripple. The heaven had cast aside its dark pall of clouds, and shone clear and dry in all the splendour of that light that is its own.

And lo ! at the head of the great procession there came 8 the vanguard, most beauteously adorned by the zeal of each votary therein. One girt about with a baldric counterfeited a soldier, another with cloak girt high was shown by his boots and his spears to be a huntsman, another wearing gilded shoes and arrayed in robes of silk and rich adornment, with mincing gait and long perruque simulated a woman, while another distinguished by greaves, helm, shield and sword, thou wouldest deem to have come forth from a school of gladiators. Others also there were who with purple toga and licitor's rods¹ played the part of magistrates, or with cloak and staff, with woven slippers and goatlike beard, aped the philosopher, or carrying reed rods of diverse shape wore the guise of the fowler with his birdlime or of the fisherman with his hooks. I saw, too, a tame bear clad like a matron and borne in a lifter ; a monkey wearing a plaited hat and saffron robe such as the Phrygians wear, disguised as the shepherd Ganymede and bearing

¹ *fascibus* (Vulgo).

a golden cup ; and an ass with false wings glued to his back walking beside a feeble old man, so that thou hadst styled the one Bellerophon, the other Pegasus, and laughed at both.

9 While the populace disported itself in this playful manner and ranged at its will, the procession itself, the peculiar rite of the saviour goddess, was being marshalled. Women shining in white raiment, bearing diverse emblems and exulting in their burden, garlanded with coronals of spring flowers, sprinkled the ground with fresh blossoms from their bosoms in front of the sacred company as it advanced. Others with glistening mirrors held reversed behind their backs rendered service before the face of the goddess as she moved upon her way. Others, with combs of ivory and waving arms and bending fingers, made as though they combed and tired the tresses of their queen. Others again there were who all about the streets of the city sprinkled drops of genial balsam and all manner of unguents. A vast number, moreover, of either sex with lanterns, torches, tapers and other kinds of artificial light propitiated the mother of the stars of heaven. Then came sweet orchestras and pipe and flute, making ravishing music. They were followed by a pleasant choir of chosen youths, exceeding bright in snowy robes and festal garb, who repeated a melodious hymn that some cunning poet had wrought to music by the grace of the goddess of song, the words whereof were but the prelude to the more solemn prayers. There went also players upon the flute, consecrated to mighty

Sarapis, who through a reed held slantwise toward the right ear, repeated the hymn that the god and his temple claim for their own, and with them came many who cried to the people, 'Make way, make clear the way for the holy things'.

Thereafter surged forward crowds of those initiate 10 in the divine rites, men and women of every rank and age, gleaming in the pure whiteness of linen robes. The women had veiled their hair that streamed with unguents under a covering of translucent gauze, the men had shaved away their locks to the roots and their bald heads shone bright, the earthly constellations of the great faith. With rattles of bronze and of silver, nay even of gold, they raised a shrill tinkling sound, and those that were their chiefs, even the priests of the rite, in robes of white linen drawn close about them from the level of their breasts to their very feet, carried forward the glorious emblems of the most potent gods. Of these the first stretched forth a lantern shining clear with brilliant light; yet it was not like those lamps of ours that illume our feasts at evening, but it was a golden bowl that from an opening in its midst kindled a flame of unwonted size. A second, clad in like manner, bore in both hands an altar, to which the succouring providence of the supreme goddess has given the peculiar name of 'succour'. A third walked bearing a palm-tree whose leaves were cunningly wrought of gold, and therewith also the herald's staff of Mercury. A fourth displayed the symbol of fair dealing, a deformed left hand with open

palm, which by its native clumsiness and lack of all skill and cunning seemed meeter for fair dealing than the right hand. The same man bore also a small golden vessel rounded into the semblance of a woman's breast, from which he poured libations of milk. A fifth bore a golden winnowing fan heaped high with twigs of laurel, and a sixth carried a pitcher.

11 After these straightway there came forth the gods themselves, deigning to walk with human feet upon the earth. First came the dread envoy that goes between the lords of heaven and of the nether world, even Anubis. Lofty of stature was he and his face seemed now to be black, now golden bright; high he held his doglike neck, in his left hand he bore the herald's wand, in his right he brandished a green branch of palm. Hard on his footsteps followed a heifer that held itself erect in human fashion—a heifer, the fruitful symbol of the mother of all things—supported on the shoulders of one of the priesthood, who displayed it as he stalked along with happy steps and rhythmic tread. Another bore an ark full of secret things, holding in its depths the mysteries of the glorious faith. Another—Ah! happy he!—bore in his bosom the awful image of the mighty deity, like neither to cattle nor bird nor beast of the wild nor even to mankind, but wrought by inventive skill, and meriting reverence for its very strangeness, the emblem of whose meaning no man may speak; for it is the symbol of the loftiest of faiths whose mysteries must be shrouded in deep silence. But it was fashioned in shining gold after the follow-

ing manner. It was a small urn hollowed out with wondrous skill, its bottom perfectly round and its exterior adorned with strange Egyptian figures. Its mouth projected into a long low spout with outstretched tube. On the other side, with ample arch, extended a long retreating handle, on which was set an asp with twisted coils, holding erect the streaked scales of its swelling neck.

And now, lo ! the promised blessings of the mighty 12 goddess drew near, and the priest approached bearing with him my destiny and my very salvation. As the divine promise had foretold, in his right hand he held out the sistrum of the goddess decked with flowers, and proffered me the crown of roses. Aye, and in truth it was a crown, a crown of victory, for thus, after enduring to the uttermost so many and great labours, after passing through so many perils, by the providence of the mighty goddess I triumphed over Fortune that had been so fierce against me. Yet I yielded not to any sudden transport of joy and rushed not forth with violent speed, for I feared lest the orderly procession of the faithful should be disarrayed by the sudden onset of a fourfooted beast, but slowly with quiet gait, such as might have befitted a man, little by little I gradually crept inward, edging my body through the crowd, that yielded a path for me by the prompting of the goddess. But the priest 13 who, as indeed I could easily see, had been warned of the oracle delivered to me during the night, and marvelled how closely everything concorded with the task imposed on him, stopped forthwith and of his own

impulse stretched out his right hand and held the crown to my very mouth. Then I, quivering with apprehension, my heart pulsing wildly, with greedy mouth seized the crown that shone bright with sweet inwoven roses and, longing for the fulfilment of the promise, devoured it. Nor did the heavenly promise fail me: promptly the hideous bestial form fell from me. First the rough hair was shed away, then the thick hide grew thin, the fat paunch subsided, my feet came forth through the hoofs and ended in toes once more, my hands were feet no longer, but were outstretched to perform the acts of man that walks erect, my long neck shrank, my face and head became round, my huge ears recovered their slenderness of old, my stony grinders became tiny human teeth once more, and my tail—my chiefest torment—disappeared! The people marvelled, the faithful bowed themselves before so clear a manifestation of the power of the mightiest of deities, worshipped the glorious act, wherein the visions of the night had been fulfilled, and the ease wherewith my transformation had come to pass; and with hands stretched heavenward, in unison clear and loud bore witness to the marvellous beneficence of the goddess.

14 But I stood dumbstruck, rooted to the ground by overpowering amazement, for my mind could not take in such sudden, such mighty joy. I knew not what should be my first utterance, nor how I should first make use of the voice thus restored to me, nor with what speech I might most auspiciously employ my tongue thus born anew, nor with what words I might

pay sufficient tribute of gratitude to so mighty a goddess. But the priest, whom the goddess's warning had instructed in the whole tale of my calamities from their first beginning, though even he was strongly moved by this wondrous miracle, made a sign by nodding his head that I should first of all be given a linen cloak wherein to clothe myself. For as soon as the ass had removed his loathsome integument from my limbs, I had striven, as best a naked man may, to cover my nakedness with my hands, the only veil provided by nature. Then one of the company of the faithful quickly stripped off his upper tunic and clothed me with all speed. This done, the priest, with smiling face that seemed indeed more than mortal, marvelling at the sight of me, thus addressed me:—

‘Thou hast had thy fill of many and varied troubles 15 and, driven by the great gale of Fortune and all her wildest storms, at length, Lucius, thou art come to the haven of Rest and the altar of Mercy. Thy birth and even thy high rank availed thee naught, nor yet availed thee the learning wherein thou art so rich, but thou didst fall in the slippery paths of thy youthful prime to servile pleasures and hast won a grim recompense for thy hapless curiosity. But yet Fortune's blindness and unforeseeing malice, in torturing thee thus with the worst of perils, has brought thee to the bliss, whereof thou knowest, that is granted to the faithful. Let Fortune sweep upon her way, indulge her wild fury, and seek some new victim for her cruelty. For the enmity of chance has no power over those whose lives are claimed for service

by the majesty of the goddess whom we adore. All thy afflictions—robbers, wild beasts, slavery, hard journeys, windings ending where they began, and daily fear of death—have brought impious Fortune no profit. Now thou art taken under the protection of Fortune, but of a Fortune that is not blind, but sees, and illumines the other gods also by the splendour of her light. Assume therefore a happier mien, suiting the white robe thou wearest, and follow the procession of the saviour goddess with exultant step. Let those behold that are not of the faith, let them behold and know their error. Lo ! Lucius freed from his former woes by the providence of mighty Isis, triumphs rejoicing over Fortune his foe ! But that thou mayest be the safer and the more perfectly armed, enrol thy name in this sacred soldiery—for 'tis but a little while since thou wast summoned to take the solemn oath—and dedicate thyself to the ministry of our faith and take upon thee the voluntary yoke of service. For when thou hast begun to be the servant of the goddess, then shalt thou perceive more fully the greatness of thy liberty.'

16 Thus did the good priest prophesy and then was silent, his weary breath coming in deep gasps. Thereupon I made myself one of the company of the faithful and went forward in attendance on the shrine. The whole town recognized me and gazed upon me. I was the mark of many a pointing finger, many a nod. All the people talked incessantly of me, saying, ' That is the man whom the august power of the omnipotent goddess has this day restored to human shape. Happy.

by Hercules, is he and thrice blest, by the innocence and faith of his former life to have merited such wondrous protection from heaven, that immediately upon his strange rebirth he is straightway dedicated to the service of the mysteries.'

Amid words such as these, and all the clamour of glad vows such as men make at festivals, we went slowly upon our way and drew near the sea-shore, and came to the very spot where my friend the ass had lain the preceding day. And there, after the images had been arranged in due order, the high priest first uttered forth from unpolluted lips most solemn supplications and then, after he had purified it with shining torch, with sulphur and with breaking of eggs till all was as pure as pure might be, consecrated and dedicated to the goddess a ship fashioned with exceeding skill and richly adorned round about with wondrous paintings of the Egyptians. The gleaming canvas of this blest barque bore letters inwoven in thread of gold, spelling the inaugural prayer for prosperous seafaring in the new year's commerce. The mast was of rounded pine and rose resplendent high in air, and its top was a sight for the eyes, so fairly was it fashioned. Bright shone the stern, whose curving beak was overlaid with leaf of gold and all the hull glowed with the polish of its burnished sandalwood. Then all the people, the faithful and the common herd alike, vied with one another in loading the ship with winnowing fans heaped high with spice and other like offerings of supplication. Over the waves they poured in libation a paste made with milk, until the ship had received its full cargo

of abundant gifts and votive offerings of fair omen. Then they loosed it from its anchor cables, and launched it duly upon the sea, before a favouring breeze that blew for it alone. And when at length, as it sped on, the distance rendered sight of it uncertain, the bearers of the holy things took up each man the emblems he had brought and eagerly set forth homeward toward the temple, fairly arrayed in the same order as before.

17 Now when we reached the temple itself, the chief priest and those who carried the divine images and those who had long since been initiated in the mysteries of the awful shrine, all of them retired within the chamber of the goddess and arranged those breathing effigies, each in its due place. Then one of them, whom all called the ‘scribe’, took his stand before the temple gates and, after calling the whole company of the *pastophori*—for such is the title of that most holy congregation—as it had been to a public assembly, mounted a lofty tribunal, and from the writing within a book recited prayers for the prosperity of our great emperor, the senate, the knights, and the whole Roman people, the sailors and the ships, and whatsoever¹ is under the command and governance of the Roman world; then in the Greek language and after the Greek ritual he proclaimed the ‘Launching of the Ships.’² A shout from the people showed how welcome were the words, and straightway the folk, after kissing the feet of the goddess, who stood all wrought in silver on the temple steps, departed to their homes in ecstasies

¹ *quaeque* (MSS.).

² πλοιαφέσια (Mommsen).

of joy, bearing green branches and sacred wands and wreaths. But my heart would not suffer me to move a hair's-breadth from the spot, but with eyes fixed upon the image of the goddess I recalled my former misfortunes.

But the wings of flying Rumour had not waxed 18 sluggish or slow. Far and wide forthwith through all the land she had told not only of the miracle wrought by the providence of the goddess, but also of my own noteworthy adventures. Forthwith my friends and my slaves and those who were bound to me by the closest ties of kinship, put away from them the grief that had been wakened in them by the false news of my death, and rejoicing with sudden joy hastened straightway, each one with diverse gifts, to behold me who had returned from the dead and looked upon the light of day once more. And I myself, rejoiced by the sight of those whom I had never hoped to see again, right gladly received their generous offerings. For my friends, with kindly forethought, had made it their care to bring me whatsoever might most amply supply me in respect of raiment and the charges to which I was put.

After I had welcomed each one as beffited his 19 services to me and had told all my former woes and my present joys, I betook me once more to the presence of the goddess that was my heart's delight, and after hiring apartments within the precincts of the temple I made them my dwellingplace for the time being. For I had been admitted to the services of the goddess hitherto kept secret from me, and dwelt with her priests inseparably, and might not be parted from the worship

of the mighty deity. Nor was there one night or one sleep of mine that was not gladdened by visions and admonitions of the goddess, but ever and again she commanded that I who had so long been destined for her mysteries should now at length be initiated therein. But I, though my desire for initiation burned strong, was held back by a certain religious awe and terror, for I had often been told that the service of the faith was hard, that the laws of chastity and abstinence were not easy to obey, and that my life must needs be hedged about by circumspection and caution against the manifold strokes of chance to which this flesh is exposed. And as I revolved these thoughts in my mind, not once only but continually, for all my eagerness I kept putting off the day.

20 One night the priest appeared before me in a vision and showed me his lap full of gifts. When I asked him what they were, he replied that they were sent from Thessaly to be my portion and that my slave Candidus had also arrived from that country. On waking I pondered long in my thought over the vision, wondering what it might portend, especially since I was sure that I had never had any slave of that name. Yet whatever might be the outcome of the forewarning of my dream, I believed that the offering of this gift must assuredly presage certain gain. Distracted by these thoughts and overwhelmed by the prospect of felicity that seemed to be held out to me, I waited for the opening of the temple at dawn. Then when the white curtains were drawn apart and revealed to us the awful

image of the goddess, we offered up our tribute of prayer, and the priest going the round of the various altars performed the rites with solemn supplication and, drawing water from within the shrine, poured a libation from a sacred vessel. When the rites had been duly completed, the servants of the faith saluted the early dawn and with uplifted voices announced the first hour of the day. And then, lo! there arrived from Hypata the servants whom I had left there, when Fotis ensnared me and launched me upon my woful wanderings. They had heard of my story, and brought with them also my horse, who had passed into other hands and been recovered by them through the recognition of a mark upon his back. This above all made me marvel at the foresight of the vision, since not only had its promise of profit been fulfilled but also under the name of my slave Candidus it had signified the restoration of my horse, which was white in colour.

This done, I frequented the worship of the goddess, 21 with all its exacting service, more zealously than ever, since my present good fortunes gave warrant for my expectations of the future. And daily my desire to be admitted to the mysteries increased ever more and more, and again and again I visited the high priest with the most urgent entreaty that he would at length initiate me into the secrets of the night that is holy to the goddess. But he, being a man of steadfast character and famous for his observation of the strict laws of the faith, with kindly and gentle words, such as parents use to check the precocious desires of their children,

put off my insistence and soothed the great trouble of my spirit by holding forth consolatory hope of greater bliss. For he said that the day of each man's initiation was fixed by the ordinance of the goddess, and that the priest destined for her service was likewise chosen by her providence, and that a like instruction appointed the sum required for the expenses of the ceremony. He bade me like others await all these ordinances with reverent patience, warning me that it was my duty to beware with all my soul of over-eagerness and petulance, to avoid both these faults, and neither to delay when summoned nor to hasten unbidden. 'There are none', he said, 'of all the order of priests of Isis so abandoned in spirit, or so given over to death, as to venture rashly and sacrilegiously to undertake the service of the goddess without her express command and thus to contract mortal guilt. For the gates of hell and the power of life are in the hands of the goddess, and the very act of dedication is regarded as a voluntary death and an imperilling of life, inasmuch as the goddess is wont to select those whose term of life is near its close and who stand on the threshold of the night, and are moreover men to whom the mighty mysteries of the goddess may safely be committed. These men the goddess by her providence brings to new birth and places once more at the start of a new race of life. Therefore thou too must await the command of heaven although long since appointed and ordained, by the clear and evident choice of the great deity, to be highly favoured in thy service at her

shrine. And to that end thou like other servants of the goddess shouldst henceforth refrain from impious and unlawful foods, that so thou mayest more righteously win thy way to the secret mysteries of the purest of faiths.'

So spake the priest, nor did I mar my service of the 22 goddess by any impatience, but with quiet and gentleness and edifying silence rendered zealous and attentive service at the daily performance of the rites. Nor did the saving grace of the great goddess play me false, or torture me by long deferment, but in the dark of night, in commands wherein was no darkness, she clearly warned me that the day of my long desire was come, whereon she would grant the fulfilment of my most earnest prayers. She decreed also what sums I must expend at the supplications, and ordained Mithras himself, her high priest, to reveal the mysteries to me; for his destinies, she said, were closely bound with mine by the divine conjunction of certain constellations.

By these and other gracious admonitions the supreme goddess gladdened my spirit so that ere yet it was clear day I shook sleep from off me and hastened straightway to the priest's lodging. I met him even as he came forth from his bedchamber and saluted him. I had resolved to demand with yet greater persistence than my wont that I should be appointed to the service of the mysteries, as being now my due. But he, as soon as he beheld me, anticipated me and said, 'Lucius, happy and blessed art thou, whom the august deity deigns to favour with such goodwill. Why,' he said,

‘dost thou now stand idle and thyself delay thine own advancement? The day so long besought by thine unwearied prayers is come, on which by the divine commands of the goddess of many names thou shalt be admitted by my hands to the most holy secrets of the mysteries.’ Then, placing his right hand in mine, the kindly old man led me to the very doors of the great shrine, and after celebrating with solemn rite the service of the opening of the gates and performing the morning sacrifice, he brought forth from the hidden places of the shrine certain books with titles written in undecipherable letters. Some of these were in the shape of animals of all kinds, and seemed to be compendious symbols for the forms of speech; others were defended from the curiosity of profane readers, inasmuch as their extremities were knotted or curved like wheels or closely interwoven like to the tendrils of the vine. At the same time he informed me of the various provisions which it was necessary for the aspirant to 23 initiation to make. I lost no time, but with zealous liberality even greater than was required, either bought those things which were necessary myself or had them bought by my friends. And now the priest conducted me with an escort of the faithful to the nearest baths, for so, he said, the occasion demanded, and on my entering the bath, where it is the custom for the neophyte to bathe, after he had first prayed to the gods to be gracious to me, he besprinkled me with purest water and cleansed me. He then led me back to the temple and, the day being more than half spent, set me

at the feet of the goddess herself, and after that he had confided certain secrets to me, things too holy for utterance, openly before all present bade me for ten consecutive days to abstain from all pleasures of the table, to eat no living thing, and to drink no wine. All these precepts I observed with reverent abstinence, and at last the day came for my dedication to the goddess. The sun was sloping westward and bringing on the evening, when lo! on all sides crowds of the holy initiates flocked round me, each after the ancient rite honouring me with diverse gifts. Lastly, all the uninitiate were excluded, a linen robe that no man had yet worn was cast about me, the priest caught me by the hand and led me to the very heart of the holy place.

Perchance, eager reader, thou burnest to know what then was said, what done. I would tell thee, were it lawful for me to tell, and thou shouldst know all, were it lawful for thee to hear. But both tongue and ear would be infected with like guilt did I gratify such rash curiosity. Yet since perchance it is pious craving that vexes thee, I will not torment thee by prolongation of thine anguish. Hear then and believe, for what I tell is true. I drew nigh to the confines of death, I trod the threshold of Proserpine, I was borne through all the elements and returned to earth again. I saw the sun gleaming with bright splendour at dead of night, I approached the gods above, and the gods below, and worshipped them face to face. Behold, I have told thee things of which, though thou hast heard them, thou must yet know naught.

I will recount therefore only that which may without sin be imparted to the understanding of the uninitiate.

24 So soon as it was morning and the rites were accomplished, I came forth clothed in the twelve cloaks that are worn by the initiate, a raiment that is most holy but whereof no sacred bond forbids me tell, since at the time whereof I speak many saw me arrayed therein. For in the very midst of the holy temple before the image of the goddess there was a wooden dais whereto at the priest's bidding I ascended, arrayed in a robe which, for all that it was only made of linen, was so richly embroidered that I was a sight for all men's eyes. The precious cloak hung from my shoulders down my back even to my heels, and I was adorned, wheresoever thou mightest cast thine eye, with the figures of beasts broidered round about in diverse colours. Here were dragons of Ind, there gryphons from the back of the north wind, beasts after the semblance of a winged bird, created by another world than ours. This cloak the initiate call the cloak of Olympus. In my right hand I bore a torch flaming with fire, and my head was garlanded with a fair crown of spotless palm, whose leaves stood out like rays. After I had been thus adorned as the sun and set up like to the image of a god, the curtains were suddenly withdrawn and the people thronged in to gaze upon me. Thereafter I celebrated this most joyous birthday of my initiation and there were feasts and merry banquetings. The third day was likewise celebrated with ceremonial rite, a solemn breaking of my fast was enjoined upon me and my

initiation was duly consummated. Yet a few days longer I tarried there, and enjoyed the ineffable delight of dwelling with the image of the goddess, to whom I was now pledged by blessings such as I might never repay. But at length at the admonition of the goddess, after I had offered up humble thanks, not indeed to the fullness of my debt but to the best of my poor abilities, I made tardy preparation for my homeward journey, though it was hard to break those bonds of burning desire that held me back. At last I entered into the presence of the goddess and there prostrated myself; and after I had long wiped her feet with my face, I spake, though tears were in my eyes and my voice was broken with sobs, which swallowed up my words:—

‘Holy and eternal protectress of the human race, 25
that dost alway cherish mortals and bless them, thou
tendest the mischances of miserable men with a sweet
mother’s love. Nor ever doth day nor restful night,
nor even the least moment of time, pass uncrowned by
thy blessings, but alway by land and sea thou guardest
men, thou drivest from them the storms of life and
stretchest out to them thy saving hand, wherewith thou
unbindest even the inextricable weft of Fate; thou
assuagest the tempests of Fortune, and restrainest the
baleful orbits of the stars. Thee do the gods of
heaven adore, thee the lords of the world below do
worship. It is thou that whirlest the sphere of heaven,
thou that givest light to the sun, guidest the universe,
and tramplest underfoot the powers of hell. For thee

the stars shine,¹ for thee the seasons return, in thee the gods rejoice and the elements are thy slaves. At thy nod the winds blow, the clouds give increase, the seeds spring to birth and the buds burgeon. Before thy majesty tremble the birds that go to and fro in the sky, the beasts that roam the mountain, the serpents lurking underground, the monsters that swim the deep. But my wit is all too weak to tell of thy praise, my wealth too slender to make thee due offering of sacrifice. My voice is too poor in utterance to tell what I feel concerning thy majesty. Nay, had I a thousand mouths, a thousand tongues, and everlasting continuance of unwearyed speech, it would be all too little. Therefore will I strive to do all that a poor yet faithful servant may. I will guard the memory of thy divine countenance and of thy most holy godhead deep hidden within my heart's inmost shrine, and their image shall be with me for ever.'

Thus I besought the mercy of the mighty deity, and embracing Mithras, the priest, now my spiritual father, and hanging about his neck with many a kiss, I craved his pardon that I could make him no sufficient requital
 26 for so many and great benefits. Long did I tarry and lengthy were the words wherewith I thanked him, but at last I parted from him, and set forth by the shortest way to revisit the home of my fathers whence I had been absent so long. Then after a few days, at the inspiration of the mighty goddess, I hastily put together my baggage, took ship and turned my course Rome-

¹ *resplendent* (Rohde).

wards. Borne swiftly by prospering winds I came quickly to the harbour of Augustus and thence hastened upon my way in a carriage, and on the eve of the Ides of December drew nigh to that holy and inviolate city. Nor was there then aught that I desired so greatly as to offer daily supplication to the supreme godhead of Queen Isis, who takes the name of 'Goddess of the Field of Mars' from the situation of her temple, and is the object of the most fervent adoration. There then I was a continual worshipper, a stranger, it is true, to the temple, but no stranger to the faith.

And now, behold! the great sun had run through the circle of the Zodiac and completed a year, when once again the care of the beneficent and watchful deity addressed me in my slumbers and warned me that I must undergo a new initiation and perform new ceremonies. I wondered what her purpose might be and what it was that she foretold. What wonder that I should marvel thus, for methought I had been fully initiated?

Oft I debated with my own soul what this mysterious 27 riddle might mean, oft I sought help from the counsels of the initiate, until I made this most strange and marvellous discovery, to wit, that I had been initiated only into the mysteries of the goddess, but was yet to be illuminated by the mysteries of the mighty god, unconquered Osiris, supreme father of the gods; for although the significance of the deity himself and of his faith was closely linked, nay rather one and individual with that of Isis and her faith, yet the methods of initiation

were far different: henceforth I must perceive that the great god also demanded me for his servant. Nor did the matter long remain in suspense. For on the next night I saw one of the initiate with linen raiment cast about him, who bore wands and ivy, and certain mystic emblems whereof I may not speak, and placed them before my household gods: then seating himself in my chair he bade me give a banquet in honour of the great faith. And in order to enable me to recognize him by a sure sign he walked gently with halting steps, his left heel bent slightly upwards. Wherefore, after so clear a manifestation of the will of the gods, all the darkness of doubt was swept from me, and so soon as I had offered my morning salutations to the goddess, I zealously inquired of each of the initiate whether any of them had a foot shaped as I had seen in my dream. Nor did confirmation of the dream fail me. For immediately I saw one of the *pastophori* who, apart from the proof afforded by the shape of his foot, conformed exactly both in stature and bearing with my vision of the night. I afterwards learned that he was called Asinius Marcellus, a name that seemed to have reference to my transformation. I hailed him forthwith and found that he was not ignorant of what I had to say to him, since he had already been warned by a like admonition that he must admit me to the mysteries. For on the previous night it seemed to him that while he was twining garlands for the great god, the deity¹ himself appeared to him, and from that mouth

¹ Inserting *conspexisse numen divinum*.

that utters forth the fate of each and all proclaimed to him that there was sent to him a man of Madaura, one who was quite poor, to whom he must straightway reveal the mysteries; for by the god's providence great glory of learning awaited him of Madaura and great reward was destined for him with whom he now spake. But though I was thus pledged to the rites of 28 initiation, I was delayed contrary to my desire by the slenderness of my purse. For the expense of travel had impaired my fortune, which had never been large, and the money which I had to spend in Rome far exceeded what I had previously spent in the Province of Achaea. My course was thus hindered by cruel poverty, and as the old proverb says, I was between the devil and the deep sea. None the less I was repeatedly urged on by the persistent commands of the deity. And since I had now, much to my perturbation, been so admonished not seldom and was at last positively commanded to do so by the god, I sold my wardrobe, scanty as it was, and scraped together a sufficient sum. The words where-with the god most especially admonished me were these, 'If thou wert devising aught to procure thine own pleasure, thou wouldest not shrink to sell thy raiment; and dost thou now, when thou art destined to draw nigh such mighty ceremonies, shrink to commit thyself to a poverty thou shalt never repent?'

Therefore I prepared abundance of all that was needful and again contented myself for ten days with food wherein life had never been. Moreover, I shaved my head and was illuminated by the nocturnal rites of the

lord of all the gods, and now with full confidence frequented the sacred service of this kindred faith. This was the greatest solace of my sojourning in a strange land, nor was my manner of life the poorer thereby. For borne on by the favouring gale of good fortune, I supported myself with the gains, small though they might be, that my mastery of Roman eloquence won for me in the forum.

29 And lo ! after a brief space once more I was visited by unexpected and most marvellous commands from the gods and constrained to undergo yet a third initiation. It was no light care that then beset me, but with my mind in a very torment of suspense I questioned myself yet more earnestly than before as to whither this new and strange purpose of the heavenly ones might point, and what manner of mystery remained to be revealed after the two revelations that had already been made to me. 'In truth', I said to myself, 'both priests counselled me amiss or insufficiently.' Indeed, I began even to doubt their good faith. While I was thus tormented with this troubled tide of thoughts and stirred almost to madness, a gracious vision thus instructed me with midnight prophecy :—

'Thou hast no cause,' it said, 'to be terrified by the number of rites thou art bidden to undergo, as though somewhat had been left undone before. Nay, rather be glad that the gods thus continually deem thee worthy of their favour ; rejoice, nay exult, since it is granted thee thrice to be that which others may scarce be even once. From that number take well-deserved assurance that

happiness shall alway be with thee. This third revelation of the mysteries is above all things needful to thee, if thou wilt but recall to thy mind that the raiment of the goddess which thou didst take upon thee in Achaia was laid aside again in that ancient temple and there remains, wherefore thou canst not make supplication in them on solemn feast-days at Rome, nor shine in that robe of blessedness at such seasons as it may be enjoined upon thee. Once more then be thou initiated with glad heart at the bidding of the mighty gods, and may it prosper thee and bless thee and bring thee to salvation.'

Thus spoke the majestic eloquence of that divine 30 vision, proclaiming what should be to my profit. And therefore I made no tarrying nor slothfully put off the matter to the morrow, but forthwith I told the priest what I had seen and submitted myself to the yoke of fasting from living things. Then after passing those ten days prescribed by law everlasting, aye and even exceeding the ten in the ardour of my self-chosen abstinence, I procured all that was needful to equip me for my initiation, sparing naught, but in all things being guided by the enthusiasm of my faith rather than the measure of my fortunes. Yet I repented me of nothing in all my toil and expense, inasmuch as by the liberal providence of heaven my earnings in the forum kept me in comfortable ease. Then after a very few days the god that is greatest of the mighty gods, and highest of those that be mightiest among them, and mightiest of those that be highest, and ruler of the

mightiest, even Osiris, appeared to me in the slumber of night. To no semblance other than his own was he transformed, but deigned to welcome me face to face with his own awful voice. He bade me unhesitatingly to continue as now to win renown by my advocacy in the forum, and to have no fear of the slanders of those that wished me ill, which my learning and industry at Rome had brought upon me. And that I might not be mingled with the throng in my service of his mysteries, he chose me to be one of the company of his *pastophori*, nay even to be one of the chief elders among them. Once more therefore I shaved my head as close as might be, and veiled not nor covered my tonsure but let it meet the eye on every side, and joyfully performed the duties of that most ancient company of priests that was established in the great days of Sulla.

NOTES

BOOK I

CHAPTER 1. *Milesian manner.* The reference is to the famous collection of erotic stories by Aristides of Miletus known as the *Milesiaca*.

Thereafter in the Latin city, &c. This statement that the Latin tongue was strange to him, together with his apology for his uncouth style, is in reality inconsistent with his statement in Book XI. 28, that he made a living at Rome by his eloquence. In that book he speaks as Apuleius of Madaura, here he is Lucius the Greek, the kinsman of Plutarch. The inconsistency is characteristic of his slovenly method of composition. When he began his story, he clearly had not made up his mind how it was to end. The apology for his deficiencies of style is to be explained by his desire to lend verisimilitude to his statement that he is a Greek, and perhaps also to disarm hostile criticism of what was probably his first work.

CHAPTER 2. *Sextus* of Chaeroneia, nephew of the famous Plutarch, was a Stoic philosopher of great repute and tutor to the young Marcus Aurelius.

CHAPTER 5. *Aegium* a town on the south shore of the Corinthian gulf, to the east of Patras. The mention of this name suggests the influence of the original story of the transformations of Lucius of Patras.

Hypata lies just south of the Sperchius.

CHAPTER 10. Medea when banished by Creon from Corinth obtained one day's respite, which she used to send a poisoned robe and wreath to Glauce the daughter

of Creon, for whom Jason had deserted Medea. Glauce was consumed by the fire which proceeded from the robe and wreath, and when Creon caught her in his arms he shared her fate.

CHAPTER 11. *You have done more than make me uneasy, &c.* The literal meaning is, 'It was no mere anxiety that vexed me, it was as though a spear had been thrust into me.' The word used for anxiety is *scrupulus*, the literal meaning of which is a 'sharp stone.'

CHAPTER 14. *The bolts sprang back, &c.* The bolts here appear to have been crosspins used to hold the bars fast in their places.

CHAPTER 20. It is worth noting, as characteristic of the carelessness with which Apuleius writes, that no mention is made of their actual arrival at Hypata or of the supper promised to Aristomenes as a reward for his story (ch. 4.).

CHAPTER 23. *Theseus* was entertained with hospitality by a poor old woman named Hecale, when he went forth to slay the bull of Marathon.

CHAPTER 24. *Twenty denarii.* The sum paid seems nearly as fabulous as the price demanded, but there is no reason to doubt the accuracy of the text.

BOOK II.

CHAPTER 11. *Suddenly Pamphile, &c.* For omens from lamps cp. Vergil, *Georg.* I. 391:—

Nor e'en the maids, that card their nightly task,
Know not the storm-sign, when in blazing crock
They see the lamp-oil sputtering with a growth
Of mouldy snuff-clots.

(*Rhoades' translation.*)

CHAPTER 13. *A most unhappy mischance, I might almost call it cruel disaster.* The Latin ('scaevas an saevam verius dixerim') presents a pun which is incapable of exact reproduction.

CHAPTER 15. *My servants' beds.* This is the first indication that Lucius had any servants with him. In *Lucius or the Ass* he mentions his slave at the outset of the story.

CHAPTER 21. *Stretched out his right hand, &c.* The gesture described was for the purpose of averting the evil eye or the power of witchcraft. An illustration of a 'magic hand' in bronze, in which the fingers exactly represent this attitude, is to be found in the *Guide to the Exhibition illustrating Greek and Roman Life*, published by the Trustees of the British Museum in 1908 (p. 47).

CHAPTER 26. *The Pimplean minstrel* is Orpheus, son of the Muse Calliope, who was torn to pieces by the women of Thrace. Pimpla was a place in Macedonia where was a fountain sacred to the Muses.

CHAPTER 28. *By the shrines of Coptos, &c.* Coptos is a town in the Thebais on the eastern bank of the Nile. Pliny mentions an island close to Coptos as being sacred to Isis. But there is probably no special reference, Coptos and the other Egyptian names being introduced mainly for decorative effect. The *sistrum* was a kind of rattle used in the worship of Isis (cp. the description in XI. 4).

CHAPTER 31. *The god of laughter.* This cult actually existed at Hypata and is mentioned by Pausanias.

CHAPTER 32. *Geryon* was a monster with three bodies destroyed by Hercules.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER 2. *Like the victims who are led round, &c.* In the purificatory rites known as *lustrationes* the victim was led round the place to be purified, the idea being that the powers of evil were thus fenced out as by a boundary line.

The officers of justice. The Latin phrase is *publica ministeria*, i.e. public slaves. Many of the functions of the modern police were in ancient times performed by slaves.

CHAPTER 18. *The slayer not of men but of wineskins.* The pun contained in the Latin, *non homicidam sed utricidam*, does not admit of reasonable reproduction in English.

CHAPTER 22. *Do you want me to cut my own throat?* The literal translation is 'to set the axe to my own legs'.

While you lack your accoutrements. Fotis regards him as a wingless Cupid.

CHAPTER 27. *Epona* was the protecting goddess of horses, asses, &c.

BOOK IV.

CHAPTER 8. *Lapiths and Centaurs.* The Lapiths were a wild tribe of Thessaly who fought with the Centaurs at the wedding-feast of Peirithous.

CHAPTER 11. *The sea.* The sea is many miles from Thebes. Although Plautus in the *Amphitryon* likewise makes Thebes on the sea, it is probable that this curious inaccuracy on the part of Apuleius is an indication that the scene of the original story was laid in some sea-port, perhaps in Asia Minor. Apuleius would be almost capable of laying the scene at Thebes merely for the

sake of the epithet *heptapylos* (9), i. e. of the seven gates.

CHAPTER 22. *The leaping priests of Mars.* The Salii were priests of Mars whose ritual was marked by a survival of a primitive war-dance, while the banquets in connexion with their festival were famous for their sumptuousness.

CHAPTER 26. *Attis*, the mysterious offspring of the daughter of the river god Sangarius, was about to wed the daughter of the King of Pessinus when he was stricken with madness by Agdistis, daughter of Zeus and Earth, who had fallen in love with Attis and was jealous of his bride.

Protesilaus, a prince of Phylace, married Laodamia, but was forced to leave her to lead the Thessalian contingents to the siege of Troy. He was there slain. 'His wife with marred visage was left alone in Phylace, yea, and his bridal chamber half-buildeed; for a Dardanian warrior slew him as he leapt from his ship far the first of the Achaeans.' (Hom. *Il.* II. 699, Lang, Leaf, and Myers's translation.)

CHAPTER 29. *The sacred couches.* Couches were provided in the temples, on which the images of the gods were laid, as for a banquet, in the rite known as *lectisternium*.

CHAPTER 31. *Portunus*, the Roman harbour god.

Salacia, the wife of Neptune.

Palauemon, or Melicertes, a sea god, the infant son of Athamas and Ino, sometimes identified with Portunus.

CHAPTER 32. *In order not to embarrass the author of this Milesian tale.* Apuleius forgets that the story is being told by an old Greek woman and that the ass who reports it also claims to be of Greek birth, and speaks in

his own person. It is characteristic of his whimsicality and his indifference to all save a very limited number of types of stylistic effect, that he never troubles to make his personages speak in character and cares little for inconsistencies.

BOOK V.

CHAPTER 1. *You will perceive, &c.* This use of the second person is purely literary. It is not natural in the mouth of the old woman as addressed to the captive girl, but it is in reality addressed to the 'gentle reader'. The inconsistency is much the same as that discussed in the preceding note. It is really a 'Milesian tale' thrust bodily into the midst of the novel, and Apuleius makes no effort to conceal the fact.

CHAPTER 6. *Only remember when later . . . gocca earnest.* The pun on *sero* and *seriae* cannot be reproduced in English.

CHAPTER 26. *Begone from my couch and take with thee what is thine.* Psyche quotes the Roman formula for divorce.

CHAPTER 30. *A widow.* Venus speaks as if Vulcan, her first husband, were dead, and as if Mars were her second husband.

BOOK VI.

CHAPTER 4. At *Argos* and *Samos* were two of the chief Greek shrines of Hera (Juno). The Carthaginian goddess here identified with Juno is Tanith. On the coins of the emperor Septimius Severus she is represented as riding on a running lion. *Zygia* is her title as the goddess of marriage, for she 'yokes' husband and wife together. A further function of the goddess of

marriage is that of superintending childbirth. In this capacity Juno is *Lucina*, the goddess who brings the child to the light of day. She was also worshipped as the *saviour goddess* at Rome.

Inachus is a river of Argos.

CHAPTER 4. *My son's wife.* Venus had married Vulcan the son of Juno.

The laws forbidding harbourage, &c. Juno represents herself as liable to a celestial counterpart of the *lex Fabia de Plagiariis*. Cp. the references to the Julian Laws (22).

CHAPTER 8. *Behind the Murtian pyramids.* Murtia was an ancient Roman goddess who had a shrine in the Circus Maximus. She was identified with Venus. The Murtian pyramids were the turning-posts at the south end of the circus. They were wooden cylinders of conical shape, three in number. There was a temple of Mercury not far off on the slopes of the Aventine above the circus. The mention of the *metae Murtiae* suggests that this portion of the story was written at Rome. The eleventh book was clearly written, if not at Rome, at any rate while the impression made by his initiations at Corinth and Rome were yet strong upon him.

CHAPTER 15. *Phrygian cupbearer*, i. e. Ganymede, son of the king of Troy.

CHAPTER 22. *The Julian Law.* The reference is to the famous *lex Iulia de adulteriis* of 17 B.C. Cp. ch. 4, note.

CHAPTER 25. *The right leg and the left.* Lucius whimsically speaks as if he were still a biped.

CHAPTER 26. *A skin as thin as that of any leech.* He means that though to outward appearance he is an ass, he is still as sensitive as if he were a man.

CHAPTER 27. *Dirce* was torn to pieces at the tail of a wild bull as a punishment for her treatment of Antiope.

CHAPTER 29. *Phrixus*, the son of Athamas, escaped to Colchis from the wrath of his stepmother Ino on the back of a miraculously sent golden ram, which bore him across the sea to Colchis.

Arion was forced to throw himself into the sea by the sailors of the ship on which he was travelling. Before doing so he obtained leave to play a tune upon his lyre, with the result that, when he fell into the water, a dolphin attracted by his music received him on its back and bore him safe to land.

A right of way. The Latin runs 'herciscundae viae contendentes'. *Hercisci* is the technical term for the division of a property. But the translation 'right of way' seems the only way of reproducing the legal jest.

CHAPTER 32. *Heart and hand.* The Latin literally translated is, 'They voted not with their feet, but with their whole souls.' 'To vote with one's feet' ('pedibus ire in sententiam') was the technical term for voting by going to one side of the house without expressing any opinion or speaking on the motion.

BOOK VII.

CHAPTER 8. *Two hundred thousand sesterces.* An official drawing this salary would be a procurator or agent in charge of some portion of the imperial estates in the provinces.

CHAPTER 10. *Zacynthus*, the modern Zante.

Actium lies on the west coast of northern Greece, on the south shore of the Bay of Prevesa.

CHAPTER 15. The fact that the news of the death of Tlepolemus and his wife Charitè causes the whole company of slaves to decamp, shows that the herds must have belonged to Tlepolemus. This is not made clear in VII. 14, where the parents of Charitè are consulted as to the disposal of the ass. In *Lucius or the Ass* (27) it is the girl's father who gives orders for the reward of the heroic ass. Apuleius has minimized the inconsistency which apparently existed in the original work of Lucius of Patras. The original inconsistency was perhaps due to the conflation of two different stories.

CHAPTER 16. Diomede, King of Thrace, fed his horses on human flesh.

BOOK VIII.

CHAPTER 24. *The Syrian goddess.* 'The first Semitic deity which Italy learned to know was Atargatis, often confounded with Astarte. This goddess possessed a temple of great renown at Bambryce or Hierapolis, not far from the Euphrates, and was adored in conjunction with her husband Hadad throughout a great portion of Syria. The Greeks regarded her as the Syrian goddess *par excellence*, and in Latin-speaking countries she was commonly known as the *dea Syria*.' (Cumont, *Les Religions orientales dans le paganisme romain*, p. 126.)

CHAPTER 25. *Sabadius* or *Sabazius* is one of the many names under which Bacchus was worshipped. *Sabadius* was, however, originally a Phrygian deity, the son of *Rhea* or *Cybele*, to whom we have a reference here in the *mother of Mount Ida*. *Bellona* was the Roman goddess of war.

CHAPTER 26. *A doe substituted for a girl.* The

allusion is to the story of the sacrifice of Iphigenia at Aulis. Artemis was said miraculously to have snatched away Iphigenia and caused a doe to be slain in her place.

BOOK IX.

CHAPTER 9. It is noticeable that Apuleius has never mentioned the fact that the priests had placed the image in the temple, and has therefore given no indication how they could have stolen the cup. The incident is, however, fully described in *Lucius or the Ass* (41). Apuleius has, here as elsewhere, copied his original with but indifferent care.

CHAPTER 10. *The prison.* The Latin is *Tullianum*, the name of the old subterranean state-prison at Rome built by King Servius Tullius. Perhaps we have here another faint indication that the novel was written at Rome.

CHAPTER 11. *On the contrary, although when I moved as a man among men I had often seen similar machines, &c.* Apuleius forgets that his hero had not only seen similar machines when he was a man, but had actually worked in such a machine when an ass (cp. VII. 15).

CHAPTER 14. *She was cruel, perverse, &c.* The Latin runs 'saeva scaeva virosa pervicax pertinax'. The play upon words cannot be reproduced in English.

She believed in one sole god, i. e. she was a Christian or a Jew.

CHAPTER 24 sqq. The story which follows is to be found in Boccaccio, *Decameron*, Giorn. V. Nov. 10.

CHAPTER 28. *Sent a message to his wife.* A technical phrase for divorce.

BOOK X.

CHAPTER 3. *Thou thyself art the sole cause, &c.* The whole of this speech is closely imitated from the corresponding scene between Phaedra and Hippolytus in the *Phaedra* of Seneca.

CHAPTER 8. *The fratricide's sack.* Men guilty of unnatural murder (*parricidium*) were sewn up in a sack with a dog and a monkey and drowned.

CHAPTER 14. *Eteocles*, son of Oedipus, engaged in fratricidal strife with his brother Polynices to win the throne of Thebes.

CHAPTER 15. *The Harpies* were winged monsters sent as a curse upon Phineus, King of Salmydessus in Thrace. They snatched away the food from his table or rendered it uneatable by the pollution of their touch.

CHAPTER 18. *Duumvir quinquennalis*, the highest municipal office.

CHAPTER 29. *Pyrrhic dance* originally was a war-dance in armour. Here it is used for a more peaceful display, preserving the 'figures' of the war-dance.

CHAPTER 30. *The Phrygian shepherd, &c.* Paris.

CHAPTER 33. *Palamedes.* Ulysses feigned madness that he might avoid joining the expedition against Troy. His *ruse* was detected by Palamedes, son of the king of Euboea. Ulysses to revenge himself forged a letter from Priam to Palamedes. Palamedes was found guilty of treachery and stoned to death.

Ajax and Ulysses contended for the armour of Achilles. It was awarded to Ulysses and Ajax committed suicide.

An old man of godlike simplicity, &c. Socrates.

CHAPTER 35. *Gencreae.* One of the three sea-ports of Corinth.

BOOK XI.

For the worship of Isis, see Cumont, *Les Religions orientales dans le paganisme romain*; Erman, *Egyptian Religion* (Transl. Griffiths); Lafaye, *Histoire du culte des divinités d'Alexandrie hors de l'Égypte*; Dill, *Roman Society under the Empire* (from Nero to Marcus Aurelius).

CHAPTER 4. *rattle*: i. e. the *sistrum*, sacred to Isis.

With neck that swelled, &c. The reference is to the hood of the Egyptian cobra.

CHAPTER 5. *The mother of the gods at Pessinus.* Cybele, worshipped at Pessinus on the borders of Phrygia and Galatia.

Cecropian, from Cecrops, an ancient king of Athens.

Dictynna, a fishing goddess of Crete (*δίκτυον*, a net), identified with Artemis.

The Rhamnusian. Nemesis, worshipped at Rhamnus in Attica.

The Sicilians are called *trilingues* because the Greek, Latin, and Sikel languages were all spoken among them.

CHAPTER 8. *The fowler with his birdlime.* Bird-catchers used long jointed rods, the tops of which were smeared with birdlime.

Bellerophon, mounted on the winged horse Pegasus, slew the Chimera, the triple monster that devastated Lycia.

CHAPTER 9. *Sarapis or Serapis*, the Greek name for Osiris-Apis, the dead Apis Bull. 'That he was originally only a dead sacred bull was forgotten and he was confused with Osiris, until finally Serapis became nothing more than the Greek name for the god of the dead.' Erman, op. cit. p. 217.

CHAPTER 11. *Anubis*, the ancient dog-headed god of the dead among the Egyptians.

CHAPTER 17. *pastophori*: i.e. shrine-bearers.

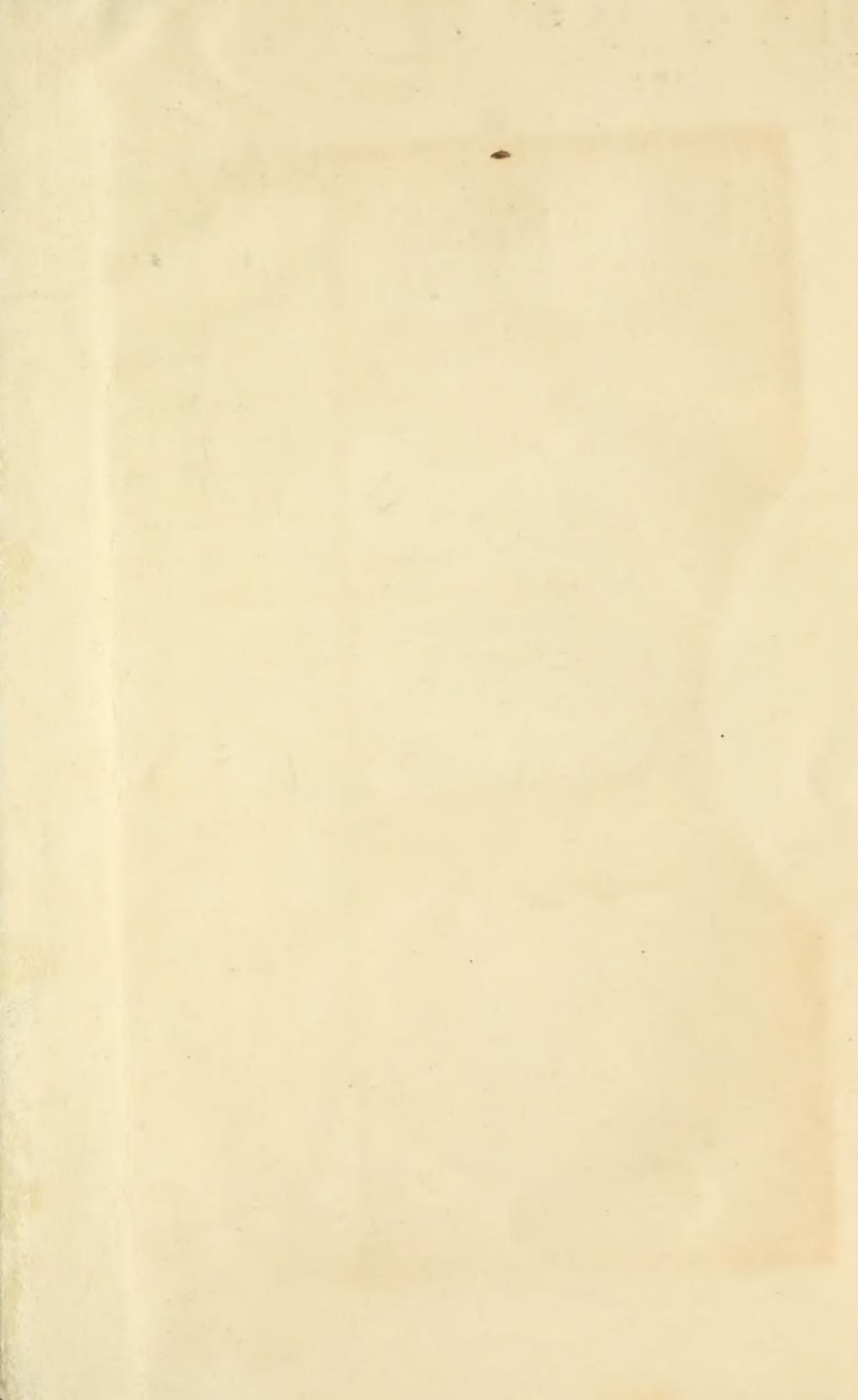
CHAPTER 22. *Some of these were in the shape of animals, &c.* The two scripts here mentioned are the hieroglyphic and hieratic.

CHAPTER 24. *I saw the sun, &c.* Probably some symbolic masque was organized to impress the novice. The passage can hardly be explained as describing a mere hallucination.

CHAPTER 26. *The harbour of Augustus.* The port of Rome, just to the north of Ostia.

CHAPTER 27. *Osiris*, brother and husband of Isis. Torn in pieces by his brother Set, he was restored to life by Isis, and ruled as king among the dead.

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